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## COMMUNICANT'S COMPANION:

OR,

INSTRUCTIONS AND HELPS

FOR THE

RIGHT RECEIVING

OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

BY MR. MATTHEW HENRY,

BERWICK:

PRINTED BY W. PHORSON, BRIDGE-STREET!

WOIN MINOR

## READER.

I HERE humbly offer you, Christian reader, some assistance in that great and good work, which you have to do, and are concerned to do well, when you attend the table of the Lord; a work wherein I have observed most serious people desirous of help, and willing to use the helps they have: which I consels was one thing that invited me to this undertaking.

I offer this service with all due deserence and respect to the many excellent performances of this kind, which we are already blessed with, done by far better hands than mine: who yet have not so sully gathered in this harvest, but that these who come after may gather up plentiful gleanings, without robbing their sheaves,— "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded," and yet there is room;" room enough to enlarge upon a subject so copious, and of so great a compass that it cannot be exhausted.

I do this also with a just sense of my own unworthines, and unsitness to "bear the vessels of the Lord," and to do any service in his fanctuary. Who am I, and what is my sather's house, that I should have the honour to be "a door-keeper in the house of my God," to shew his guests the way to his table? And that I should be employed thus to "hew wood, and draw "water for the congregation of the Lord? I reckon it true preferment, and, "by the grace of God," his free grace, "I am what I am." It is service which is its own recompence. Work which is its own wages. In helping to seed others, we may feast ourselves; for our master hath provided that "the mouth of the ox "be not muzzled when he treads out the corn. For

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my part, I would not exchange the pleasure of converse with the scriptures and divine things, for all the "delight of the sons and daughters of men, and the "peculiar treasures of kings and provinces. It was a noble faying of the Marquis of Vico, "Let their "money perish with them, who esteem all the wealth of this world worth one hour's communion with God in lesus Christ.

In doing this, I hope I can truly fay, my defire and defign is to contribute fomething to the faith, holiness, and joy of those that in this ordinance have "given up their names to the Lord Jesus." And if God, by his grace, will make this endeavour some way serviceable to that end, I have what I wish, I have what I aim at; and it will not be the first time that praise hath been "persected, and strength or-"dained out of the mouths of babes and sucklings."

In this esfay, I have an eye particularly to that little handful of people among whom I have been (in much weakness) ministring in these holy things now feventeen years; during all which time, through the good hand of our God upon us, we have never once been disappointed of the stated solemnites, either of our new moons or our fabbaths. As I defigned my Scripture Catechism, and the other little one that followed it, to be a present, and perhaps ere long it may prove my legacy, to the young ones, the lambs of the flock : fo I recommend this to the adult, and leave it with them, being defirous that the sheep we are charged to feed, may "go in and out, and find " pasture." And I earnestly wish, that both these may prove successful expedients to preserve some of those things they have been taught, from being quite forgotten; and that, " after my difeafe, they and theirs " will have those things always in remembrance."

And

And lastly, I fend this abroad under the protection and blessing of heaven; with a hearty prayer to God to forgive whatever is mine, that is, what is amiss and desective in the performance; and graciously to accept what is his own, that is, whatever is good and prositable: hoping that, if God pardon my desects and instrmities, my friends also will overlook them; and that, if he favourably accept my endeavours through Christ, they also will accept them: for truly it is the top of my ambition to approve myself.

A faithful fervant to Christ and fouls,

CHESTER, 3 June 21. 1704.

MATTHEW HENRY.

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## C H A P. I.

The Names by which this Ordinance is usually called.

I N discoursing of this great and solemn ordinance, which every serious Christian looks upon with a peculiar regard and veneration, because I purpose, as God shall enable me, to open as well the doctrine as the duty of it, it will be proper enough, and I hope, profitable, to take some notice of the several names by which it is known.

First, We call it the sacrament: this is the name we commonly give it, but improperly, because it doth not distinguish from the ordinance of baptism, which is as much a sacrament as this; a sacrament which we have all received, are all bound by, and are concerned to improve, and live up to: but, when, we call this ordinance, the sacrament, we ought to remind ourselves, that it is a sacrament; that is, it is a sign, and it is an oath.

1. It is a fign, an outward and visible fign of an inward and spiritual grace; for such sacraments are defigned to be. It is a parable to the eye; and in it God uses similitudes, as he did of old by his servants the prophets, Hof. xii. 10. In it Christ tells us earthly things, John iii. 12. that thereby we may come to be more familiarly acquainted, and more warmly affected with spiritual and heavenly things. In it Christ speaks to us in our own language, and accomodates himself to the capacites of our present state. Man consists of body and foul, and the foul admits impressions, and exerts its power by the body: here's an ordinance therefore, which confifts of body and foul too; wherein Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are in the instituted elements of bread and wine, set before us, and offered to us. We live in a world of fenfe, not yet in the world of spirits; and, because we therefore find it hard to look above the thing that are feen, we are directed in a facrament to look through them, to those things not feen, which are represented by them. That things merely fensible, may not improve the advantage they have from our present state wholly to ingross our thoughts and cares, in compassion to our infirmity, fpiritual things are in this ordinance made in a manner fenfible.

Let us therefore rest contented with this sign which Christ hath appointed, in which he is "evidently set forth crucified among us," Gal. iii. 1. and not think it can be any honour to him, or advantage to ourselves, but, on the contrary, a dishonour to him, and an injury to ourselves, to represent by images and pictures the same things which this ordinance was designed to be the representation of. If infinite wisdom thought this sign sufficient, and most proper to affect the heart, and excite devotion, and stamp it accordingly with an institution, let us acquiesce in it.

Yet let us not rest contented with the sign only, but converse by saith with the things signified, else we receive the grace of God in this appointment in vain; and sacraments will be to us, what parables were to them that were wilfully blind, blinding them the more, Mark iv. 11, 12. What will it avail us to have the shadow without the substance, the shell without the kernel, the latter without the Spirit? "As the body without the soul is dead," so our seeing and receiving bread and wine, if therein we see and receive

not Christ crucified, is dead also.

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2. It is an oath. That's the ancient fignification of the word facrament. The Romans called the oath which foldiers took to be true to their general Sacramentum militare; and our law still uses it in this fense, dicunt supper facramentum suum, they say, upon their oath: fo that to take the facrament, is to take an oath, a folemn oath, by which we bind our fouls with a bond unto the Lord, Numb. xxx. 2. It is an oath of allegiance to the Lord Jesus, by which we engage ourselves to be his dutiful and loyal fubjects, acknowledging him to be our rightful Lord and Sovereign. It is as a freeman's oath, by which we enter ourselves members of Christ's mystical body, and oblige ourselves to observe the laws, and feek the good of that Jerusalem which is from above, that we may enjoy the privileges of that great charter by which it is incorporated. An oath is an appeal to God's knowledge of our fincerity and truth in what we affert or promise; and in this ordinance we make such an appeal as St Peter did, 'Lord, 'thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' John xxi. 17. An oath is an imprecation of God's wrath upon ourselves, if we deal falsely, and wilfully prevaricate; and fomething of that also there is in this facrament; for, if we continue in league with fin, . while we pretend to covenant with God, 'we eat and and drink judgement to ourselves, 1. Cor. xi. 29.

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Let us therefore, according to the character of a virtuous man, Eccl. ix. 2. fear this oath: not fear to take it; for it is our duty, with all possible folemnity to oblige ourselves to the Lord, but fear to break it, for oaths are not to be jested with. God hath said it. and hath fworn it by himfelf, Ifa. xlv. 23. "Unto me " every tongue shall swear:" But he hath said also, Jer. iv. 2. That we must swear to him in truth; in judgment, and in righteoufnefs; and, having fworn, we must perform it, Pfal. exix. 106. If we come to this facrament carelelly and inconfiderately, we entur the guilt of rash swearing: if we go away from this sacrament, and walk contrary to the engagments of it, we incur the guilt of falle swearing. Even natural religion teacheth men to make conscience of an oath; much more doth the Christian religion teach us to make conscience of this oath, to which God is not only a witness, but a party.

Secondly, We call it the Lord's supper, and very properly, for so the scripture calls it, 1-Cor. xi 20 where the apostle, reproving the irregularities that were among the Corinthians, in the adminstration of this ordinance, tells them, "This is not to eat the

" Lord's Supper."

1. It is a supper. A supper is a stated meal for the body; this is so for the soul, which stands in as much need of its daily bread as the body doth. Supper was then accounted the principal meal; this ordinance is so among Christ's friends, and in his samily; it is the most solemn entertainment. 'Tis called a supper, because it was first instituted in the evening, and at the close of the passover-supper; which though it tie not us always to administer it about that time, because it would be inconvenient for religious assemblies, yet it signifies, (1.) That Christ now, in the end of the world, in the declining part of its day, as the great evening

evening sacrifice, 'hath appeared to put away sin,' Heb. ix 26. This glorious discovery was reserved for us 'upon whom the ends of the world are come,' I Cor. x. 11. (2.) That comfort in Christ is intended for those only that dwell in God's house, that are night lodgers there, and not only day visitants; and for those only that have done the work of the day in its day, according as the duty of every day required. They only that work with Christ shall eat with him. (3.) That the chief blessings of the new covenant are reserved for the evening of the day of our life. The evening feast is a supper designed for us, when we have 'accomplished as an hireling our day, and come home

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2. It is the Lord's Supper: the Lord Christ's Supper. The apostle, in his discourse concerning this ordinance, I Cor. xi. 23, &c. all along calls Christ the Lord, and feems to lay an emphasis upon it: for as the ordaining of this facrament was an act of his dominion, and, as his church's Lord, he appointed it; fo, in receiving this facrament, we own his dominion, and acknowledge him to be our Lord. This also puts an honour upon the ordinance, and makes it look truly great; however to a carnal eye it hath no form nor comeliness, that it is the Supper of the Lord. The fanction of this ordinance is the authority of Christ; the substance of this ordinance is the grace of Christ. It is celebrated in obedience to him, in remembrance of him, and for his praise. Justly is it called the Lord's Supper; for it is the Lord Jesus that sends the invitation, makes the provision, gives the entertainment: in it we feed upon Christ: for he is the bread of life: we feed with Christ; for he is our beloved and our friend, and he it is that bids us welcome to his table. In it Christ 'sups with us, and we with him:' he doth us the honour to sup with us, though he must bring A 3

his own entertainment along with him: he gives us the happiness of supping with him upon the dainties

of heaven, Rev. iii. 20.

Let our eye therefore be to the Lord, to the Lord, Christ, and to the remembrance of his name, in this ordinance. We see nothing here, if we see not the beauty of Christ; we taste nothing here, if we taste not the love of Christ. The Lord must be looked upon as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, and all in all, in this solemnity. If we receive not Christ Jesus the Lord here, we have the supper, but not the Lord's Supper.

Thirdly, We call it the Communion, the holy com-

munion; and fitly do we call it fo: for,

1. In this ordinance we have communion with Christ our head. Truly our sellowship is with him.' I John i. 3. He here manifests himself to us, and gives out to us his graces and comforts: we here set ourselves before him, and tender him the grateful returns of love and duty. A kind correspondence between Christ and our souls is kept up in this ordinance: such as our present state will admit. Christ, by his word and Spirit, abides in us; we by faith and love, abide in him; here, therefore, where Christ seals his word, and offers his Spirit, and where we exercise our faith, and have our love enslamed, there is communion between us and Christ.

This communion supposeth union; this sellowship supposeth friendship: for, Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Amos iii. 3. We must, therefore, in the bond of an everlassing covenant, join ourselves to the Lord, and twist interests with him; and then, persuant thereto, concern him in all the concerns of our happiness; and concern ourselves in all the concerns of his glery, and this communion.

2. In this ordinance, we have communion with the universal church, 'even with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs

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and ours,' I Cor. i. 2. Hereby we profess, testify and declare, that 'we, being many, are one bread and one body,' by virtue of our common relation to our Lord Jefus Christ; 'for we are all partakers of that one bread, Christ, the bread of life,' signified and communicated in this facramental bread, I Cor. 10. 13. All true Christians, though they are many, yet they are one, and we express our confent to, and complacency in that union, by partaking of the Lord's Supper. I fay, though they are many, that is, though they are numerous, yet as a vast number of creatures make one world, governed by one providence; so a vast number of Christians make one church, animated by one Spirit, the foul of that great body. Though they are various, far distant from each other in place of distinct societies, different attainments, and divers apprehensions in teffer things: yet all meeting in Christ, they are one. They are all incorporated in one and the same church, all interested in one and the same covenant, all-stamped with one and the same image, partakers of the fame new and divine nature, and all entitled to one and the same inheritance. In the Lord's Supper we are 'made to drink into one Spirit,' 1 Cor. xii. 13. And therefore, in attending on that ordinance, we are concerned not only to preferve, but to cultivate and improve Christian love and charity; for what will this badge of union avail us, without the unity of the Spirit?

Fourthly, We call it the Eucharist; so the Greek church called it, and we from them. It signifies a

thanksgiving: and it is so called.

thanks, 1. Cor. xi 24. It should seem that Christ frequently offered up his prayers in the form of thankf-givings, as John xi. 41. 'Father I thank thee, that 'thou hast heard me;' and so he blessed the bread and

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the cup, by giving thanks over them; as the true Melchifedee, who, when he 'brought forth bread and wine to Abraham, bleffed the most high God,' Gen. xiv. 18. 20, Though our Saviour, when he instituted the sacrament, had a full prospect of his approaching sufferings, with all their aggravations, yet he was not thereby indisposed for thanksgiving; for praising God is a work that is never out of season. Though the Captain of our salvation was now but girding on the harness, yet he gives thanks as though he had put it off, being consident of a glorious victory; in the prospect of which, even before he took the field, he did, in this ordinance, divide the spoils among his followers, and gave gifts unto men, Psal. lxviii. 18-

(2.) Because we, in the participation of it, must give thanks likewise. It is an ordinance of thanksgiving appointed for the joyful celebrating of the Redeemer's praises. This sacrifice of atonement Christ himself offered once for all, and it must not, it cannot be repeated; but sacrifices of acknowledgment Christians must offer daily, that is 'the fruit of our lips, giving 'thanks to his name,' Heb. xiii. 15. The cup of salvation must be a cup of blessing, with which, and for which, we must bless God, as the Jews were wont to do very solemnly at the close of the passover supper; at which time Christ chose to institute this sacrament, because he intended it for a perpetual thanksgiving,

till we come to the world of praise.

Come, therefore, and let us fing unto the Lord in this ordinance; let the high praises of our Redeemer be in our mouths, and in our hearts; would we have the comfort, let him have the praise of the great things he hath done for us; let us remember, that thanksgiving is the business of the ordinance, and let that turn our complaints into praises; for whatever matter of complaint we find in ourselves, in Christ we find abun-

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dant matter for praise; and that is the pleasant subject which, in this ordinance, we should dwell upon.

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Fiftbly, We call it the feaft, the Christian feaft. Christ our passover being facrificed for us, in this ordinance we kept the feast, 1 Cor. v. 8. They that communicate, are faid to feast with us, Jude, ver. 12. This name, though not commonly used, yet it is very fignificant; for it is fuch a supper as is a feast. Gospelpreparations are frequently compared to a feaft, as lfaxxv. 6. Luke xiv. 16. The guests are many, the invitation folemn, and the provision rich and plentiful, and therefore fitly is called a feast of fouls; 'a feast is ' made for laughter,' Eccl. x. 19. fo is this for spiritual joy; the wine here defigned to make glad the heart. A feast is made for free conversation, so is this for communion between heaven and earth; in this banquet of wine, the golden sceptre is held out to us, and this fair proposal made, 'What is thy petion, and it stall be granted thee?'

Let us fee what kind of a feast it is.

(1.) It is a royal feast. 'A feast like the feast of a king,' I Sam. xxv. 36. i. e. a magnificent feast. 'Tis a feast like that of king Ahasuerus, Esth. i. 3. 4, 5. 'A featt for all his fervants,' and defigned, as that was, not only to shew his good-will to those whom he had feasted but to 'shew the riches of his glorious king-'dom, and the honour of his excellent majesty.' The treasures hid in Christ, even his unsearchable riches, are here fet open, and the glories of the Redeemer illustriously displayed. He who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, here affues out the same order that we find him giving, Rev. xix. 17, 18. 'Come gather your-' felves together to the supper of the great God;' and that must needs be a great Supper. The wifest of kings introduceth wisdom herself as a queen or princess making this feast, Prov. ix. 1, 2. 'wisdom hath killed her beafts, and mingled her wine.' At a royal feast

feast, the provision, we may be sure, is rich and noble, such as becomes a king to give, though not such beggars as we are to expect: the welcome also we may be sure is free and generous; Christ gives like a king,

Let us remember that in this ordinance, we fit to eat with a Ruler, with a Ruler of rulers, and therefore must consider diligently what is before us, and observe a decorum, Prov. xxiii. 1. He is a King that comes in to see the guests, Matth. xxii. 11. and there-

fore we concerned to behave ourselves well.

(2.) It is a marriage-feast; it is a feast made by a King at the marriage of his Son; fo our Saviour reprefents it, (Matth. xxii. 2. 3.) not only to speak it exceeding rich and fumptuous, and celebrated with extraordinary expressions of joy and rejoicing, but because the covenant here fealed between Christ and his church is a marriage covenant, such a covenant as makes two one, Eph. v. 31, 32. A covenant founded in the dearest love, founding the nearest relation, and defigned to be perpetual. In this ordinance, (1.) We celebrate the memorial of the virtual espousals of the church of Christ when he died upon the cross, to 'fanctify and cleanse it, that he might present it to himself. Eph. v. 6. 'That was the day of his espousals, the 'day of the gladness of his heart.' 2. The actual espoulals of believing fouls to Christ, are here folemnized, and that agreement ratified, Cant. ii. 16. 'My beloved is mine and I am his.' The foul that renounces all other lovers which stand in competition with the Lord Jesus, and joins itself by faith and love to him only, is in this ordinance 'presented as a chaste virgin to him, 2 Cor. xi 2, (3.) A pledge and earnest of the public and complete espousals of the church of Christ at his fecond coming, is here giving: 'then the marriage of the Lamb comes,' Rev. xix. 7. and we according to his promise, hereby declare that we look for it.

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If we come to a marriage-feaft, we must not come without a wedding garment, that is, a frame of heart. and a disposition of soul agreeable to the solemnity. conforming to the nature, and answering the intentions of the gospel, as it is exhibited to us in this ordinance. 'Holy garments, and garments of praise,' are the wedding garments; 'Put on Christ, put on the new man: these are the wedding garments. In hefe we must, with our lamps in our hands, as the vise virgins, go forth, with all due observance, to at-

end the royal bridegroom.

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(3.) It is a feast of memorial, like the feast of the passover, of which it is faid, Exod. xii. 14. 'This day shall be into you for a memorial, and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord—a feast by an ordinance for ever.' The deliverance of Ifrael out of Egypt was a vork of wonder never to be forgotten; the feast of inleavened bread was therefore instituted to be annully observed throughout all the ages of the Jewish hurch as a folemn memorial of that deliverance, that he truth of it being confirmed by this traditional evience, might never be questioned; and that the rememrance of it, being frequently revived by this fervice, ight never be loft by tract of time. Our redemption y Christ from fin and hell, is a greater work of woner than that was, more worthy to be remembered, and et (the benefits that flow from it being spiritual) more pt to be forgotten: this ordinance was therefore inituted, and instituted in the close of the passover-super, as coming in the room of it) to be a standing meorial in the church, of the glorious atchievements of he Redeemer's cross; the victories obtained by it over ne powers of darkness, and the salvation wrought by it hrist r the children of light. 'Thus the Lord hath made is wonderful works to be remembered,' Pfal. exi. 4. (4.) It is a feast of dedication. Solomon made such feaft for all Israel, when he dedicated the temple,

I Kings viii. 65. as his father David had done, when he brought the ark into the tabernacle, 2 Sam. vi. 10. Even the children of the captivity kept the dedication of the house of God with joy,' Ezra vi 19. In the ordinance of the Lord's Supper we dedicate ourfelves to God as living temples, temples of the Holy Ghoft, separated from every thing that is common and profane, and entirely devoted to the fervice and honour of God in Christ to shew that we do this with cheerfulness and full satisfaction, and that it may be done with an agreeable folemnity, this feaft is appointed for the doing of it, that we may, like the people of Ifrael, when Solomon dismissed them from his feast of dedication, 'go to your tents joyful, and glad of heart, for all the goodness that the Lord hath done for David his fervant, and for Ifrael his people.

(5.) It is a feast upon a facrifice. This, methinks is as proper a notion of it as any other. It was the law and custom of facrifices, both among the Jews, and in other nations, that when the beast offered was slain the blood sprinkled, the fat, and some select parts of burnt upon the altar, and the priest had his share on of it, then the remainder was given back to the offerer; on which he and his samily and friends feaste with joy. Hence we read of Israel after the sless, eating the sacrifices, and so partaking of the altar, Cor. x. 18. that is, in token of their partaking of the benefit of the sacrifice, and their joy therein. And the eating of the sacrifice was a religious rite expressive of their communion with God in and by the sacrifice

Now, (1.) Jesus Christ is the great and only fact fice, who, by being 'once offered, perfected for ever them which are sanctified; and this offering new never to be repeated; that once was sufficient.

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1 n which we receive the atonement, as the expression

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ioni Ro Rom. v. 11. that is, we give confent to, and take complacency in the method which infinite wisdom hath taken of justifying and saving us by the merit and mediation of the Son of God incarnate. In feasing upon the facrifice, we apply the benefit of it to ourselves, and ascribe the praise of it to God with joy and thankfulness.

(6.) It is a feast upon a covenant. The covenant between Isaac and Abimelech was made with a feast, Gen. xxxi. 30, 31. So was that between Laban and lacob, Gen. xxxi. 46. 54. and their feafting upon the facrifices was a federal rite, in token of peace and communion between God and his people. In the Lord's Supper we are admitted to feast with God, in token of reconciliation between us and him through Christ. Though we have provoked God, and been enemies to him in our minds by wicked works, yet he thus gracioully provides for us, to shew, that now he hath reconciled us to himself, Col. i. 21. His enemies hungering, he thus feeds them: thirsting, he thus gives them drink; which if, like coals of fire heaped upon their heads, it melts them into a compliance with the terms of his covenant, they shall henceforth, as his own familiar friends, eat bread at his table continually, till they come to fit down with him at his table in his kingdom.

## C'HAP. II.

## The Nature of this Ordinance.

MEN the Jews, according to Gods appointment, observed the passover yearly throughout their generations, it was supposed that their children would ask them, "What mean you by this service? and they were directed what answer to give to that enquity, Exod. xii. 26, 27. The question may very fitly be asked

asked concerning our gospel passover. What mean we by this service? We come together in a public and select assembly of baptized Christians, under the conduct and presidency of a gospel minister; we take bread and wine, sanctified by the word and prayer, and we eat and drink together in a solemn religigious manner, with an eye to a divine institution, as our warrant and rule in so doing: this we do often: this all the churches of Christ do, and have done in every age from the death of Christ down to this day, and, we doubt not, but it will continue to be done till time shall be no more. Now, what is the true intent and meaning of this ordinance? What did Christ design it for in the institution? And what must we aim at in the observation of it?

It was appointed to be a comemorating ordinance, and a confessing ordinance; and a communicating ordi-

nance, and a covenanting ordinance.

First, The ordinance of the Lord's supper is a commemorating ordinance. This explication our Lord himself gave of it, when he said, Luke xxii. 19. "Do "this in remembrance of me." Do it for my memorial. Do it for a remembrance of me. In this ordinance he hath recorded his name for ever, and this is his memorial throughout all generations.

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We are to do this,

absent friend of ours.—It is a common ceremony of friendship to lay up something in remembrance of a friend we have valued, which we say, we keep for his sake, when he is gone, or is at a distance; as it is usual likewise to drink to one another, remembering such a friend that is absent. Jesus Christ is our beloved and our friend, the best friend that ever our souls had; he is now absent, he hath left the world, and is gone to the Father, and the heavens must contain him till the time of the restitution of all things:

the

Now this ordinance is appointed for a remembrance of him. We observe it in token of this, that though the blessed Jesus be out of fight, he is not out of mind. He that instituted this ordinance, did, as it were, engrave this open it for a motto:

When this you fee, Remember me.

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Remember him! Is there any danger of our forgetsting him? If we were not wretchedly taken up with the world and the flesh, and strangely careless in the concerns of our fouls, we could not forget him. But, in consideration of the treachery of our memories, this ordinance is appointed to mind us of Christ.

Ought we not to remember, and can we ever forget fuch a friend as Christ is? A friend that is our near and dear relation? Bone of our bone, slesh of our slesh, and not ashamed to call us brethren? A friend in covenant with us, who puts more honour upon us than we deserve, when he calls us his servants, and yet is pleased to call us friends, John xv. 15. A friend that hath so wonderfully signalized his friend-hip, and commended his love: he hath done that for us, which no friend we have in the world did, or could do for us: he hath laid down his life for us, then when the redemption of our souls was grown to precious, as otherwise to have ceased for ever-burely we must forget ourselves, if ever we forget him, since our happiness is entirely owing to his kindness.

Ought we not to remember, and can we ever forget friend, who, though he be absent from us, is negociating our affairs, and is really absent for us? He is one, but he is gone upon our business; as the foreunner he is for us entered: he is gone to appear in the presence of God for us, as our agent. Can we be inmindful of him, who is always mindful of us, and tho, as the great high priest of our prosession, bears

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the names of all his fpiritual Ifrael in his breaft-plate,

near his heart, within the vail?

Ought we not to remember, and can we ever forget a friend, who, though he be now abfent, will be abfent but a while? We see him not, but we expect to see him shortly, when he will 'come in the clouds, and every eye shall fee him; will come to receive us to himself, to share in his joy and glory. Shall we not be glad of any thing that helps us to remember him, who, not only remembered us once in our low estate, but, having once remembered us, will never forget us? Shall not his name be written in indeliable characters upon the tables of our heart, who hath graven us upon the palms of his hands? Surely we must continually remember our Judge and Lord, when behold, The Lord is at hand, and the Judge standeth before the door. Thus must we shew him forth till he come; for he comes quickly.

(2.) We are to do this in remembrance of the death of Christ as an ancient savour done us. This ordinance was instituted in the night wherein our Master was betrayed, (that night of observations, as the first passover-night is called, Exod. xii. 42. margin) which intimateth the special reference this ordinance was to have, to that which was done that night, and the day following. In it we are 'to know Christ and him 'crucified,' 1. Cor. ii. 2. and to remember his sufferings, to remember his bonds in a special manner All the saints, and all the churches, could not see Christ upon the cross; therefore, in this ordinance, that great transaction is set before us, upon which the judgment of this world turned John xii. 31. 'Now is the judgment of this world.' Here we remember the dying of the Lord Jesus; that is,

(1.) We endeavour to preserve the memory of it is the church, and to transmit it pure and entire through our age, to the children which shall be created, that

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the remembrance of it may be ever fresh, and may not die in our hand. That good thing which was committed to us as a trust, we must thus carefully keep, and faithfully deliver down to the next generation; evidencing, that we firmly believe, and frequently think of Christ's dying for us, and desiring that those who should come after us may do so too.

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brance of it in our own hearts. This ordinance was intended to "fir up our pure minds," (our impure minds we have too much reason to call them) by way of remembrance, as the expression is, 2 Pet. iii. 1. That, giving so earnest a heed to the things that belong to the great salvation, as the solemnity of this ordinance calls for, we may not at any time let them ship; or, if we do, we may, in the use thereof, speedily recover them, sleb. ii. 1. 3. The instituted images of Christ crucissed, are, in this ordinance, very strong and lively, and proper to make deep impressions of his grace and love upon the minds that are prepared to receive them, and such as cannot be worn out.

We see then, what we have to do in our attendance upon this ordinance; we must remember the suffer-

ings of Christ there, elfe we do nothing.

(1.) This supposeth some acquaintance with Christ crucified: for we cannot be said to remember that which we never knew. The ignorance, therefore, to whom the great things of the gospel are as a strange thing, which they are not concerned to acquait themselves with, cannot answer the intention of this ordinance: but they offer the blind in sacrifice, not discerning the Lord's body, and the breaking of it. It concerns us, therefore, to cry after this knowledge, and to labour after a clearer insight into the mystery of our redemption by the death of Christ; for, if we be ignorant of this, and rest in salse and consused no-

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tions

tions of it, we are unworthy to wear the Christian

name, and to live in a Christian nation.

(2.) It implies a ferious thought and contemplation of the fufferings of Christ, fuch as is fed and supplied with matter to work upon, not from a strong fancy, but from a throng faith. Natural passions may be raifed by the power of imagination, representing the flory of Christ's suffering as very doleful and tragical; but pious and devout affections are best kindled by the confideration of Christ's dying as a propitiation for our fins, and the Saviour of our fouls; and this is the object of faith, not of fancy. We must here look unto lefus as he is lifted up in the golpel, take him

as the word makes him, and fo behold him.

(3.) The contemplation of the fufferings of Christ must make such an impression upon the soul, as to work it into a fellowthip with, and conformity to Christ in his sufferings. This was the knowledge and remembrance of Christ which blessed Paul was ambitious of, to know Christ and the fellowship of his fulferings,' Phil. iii. 10. and we all, by our baptism, are in profession 'planted together in the likeness of his death,' Rom vi. 5. Then we do this in remembrance of Christ effectually, when we experience the death of Christ killing fin in us, mortifying the flesh, wearing us from this present life, weakening vitious habits and dispositions in us, and the power of Christ's cross both as a moral argument, and as the spring of spe cial grace, "crucifying us to the world, and the world "to us," Gal. vi. 14. When, in "touching the helm "of his garment," we find like that good woman Mark v. 27. virtue comes out of him to heal out fouls, then rightly remember Christ crucified.

Secondly, It is a confessing ordinance. If the hear believe unto righteousness, hereby confession is mad unto falvation, Rom. x. 10. The Lords supper is on of the peculiaries of our holy religion, by the observ

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ance of which, the professors of it are distinguished from all others. Circumcision, which was the initiating ordinance among the Jews, by leaving its mark in the stefn, was a lasting badge of distinction; baptism, which succeeds it, leaves no such indeliable character in the body: but the Lord's supper is a solemnity by which we constantly avow the Christian name, and declare ourselves not ashamed of the banner of the cross under which we were listed, but resolve to continue Christ's faithful servants and soldiers to our lives end, according to our baptismal vow.

In the ordinance of the Lord's supper we are said to shew the Lord's death, 1. Cor. xi. 26. that is,

(1.) We hereby profess our value and esteem for Christ crucified: ye shew it forth with commendation and praise; so the word sometimes signifies. The cross of Christ was to the Jews a stumbling block, because they expected a Messiah in temporal pomp and power. It was to the Greeks foolishness, because the doctrine of man's justification and falvation by it, was not agreeable to their philosophy. The wisdom of this world, and the princes of it, judged it abfurd to expest salvation by one that died a captive, and honour by one that died in difgrace; and turned it to the reproach of Christians, that they were the disciples and followers of one that was hanged on a tree at lerufalem. They who put him to fuch an agnominious death, and loaded him with all the shame they could put upon him, hoped thereby to make every one fly of owning him, or expressing any respect for him; but the wisdom of God so ordered it, that the cross of Christ is that which above any thing else Christians have cause to glory in Gal. vi. 14. Such are the fruits, the purchases, the victories, the triumphs of the cross that we have reason to call it our crown of glory, and diadem of beauty. The politicians thought it had been the interest of Christ's followers to have concealed

concealed their Lord's death, and that they should have endeavoured to bury it in forgetfulness; but in stead of that, they are appointed to shew forth their Lords death, and to keep it in everlasting remem.

brance before angels and men.

This, then, we mean, when we receive the Lord's fupper; we thereby folemnly declare that we do not reckon the cross of Christ any reproach to Christianity; and that we were so far from being ashamed of it, that, whatever constructions an unthinking unbelieving world may put upon it, to us it is the wisdom of God and the power of God; it is all our falvation, and all our desire. We think never the worse of Christ's holy religion for the ignominious death of its great Author; for we see God in it glorised, man by it saved; then is the offence of the cross ceased; then

is the reproach of it rolled away for ever-

(2.) We hereby profess our dependence upon, and confidence in, Christ crucified. As we are not asham. ed to own him, fo we are not affraid to venture our fouls, and their eternal falvation with him, believing him 'able to fave to the uttermost, all that come to God by him. And as willing as he is able, and making confession of that faith, By this folemn rite we deliberately, and of choice put ourselves under the protection of his righteousness, the influence of his grace, and the conduct and operation of his holy Spirit. The concerns that lie between us and God, are of vast consequence, our eternal weal or wo depends upon the right management of them; now hereby we folemnly declare, that having laid them near our own hearts in a ferious care about them, we chuse to lodge them in the Redeemer's hand's by a judicious faith in him, which we can give a good reason for-God having declared himself well pleased in him, we hereby declare ourselves weil pleased in him too; God having committed all judgment to the Son, we here by

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by commit all our judgment to him likewise, as the sole Reserve of the great cause, and the sole Trustee of the great concern, "knowing whom we have be"lieved, even one who is able and faithful to keep
"what we have committed to him against that day,"
that great day when it will be called for, 2 Tim. i. 11.

This then, we mean when we receive the Lord's fupper; we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we own ourselves to be his subjects, and put ourselves under his government: we confess that he is a skilful physician, and own ourselves to be his patients, resolving to observe his prescriptions; we confess that he is a faithful Advocate, and own ourselves to be his clients, resolving to be advised by him in every thing In a word, in this ordinance we profess that we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, nor of the cross of Christ, in which his gospel is all summed up, knowing it to be 'the power of God unto salvation to all 'them that believe,' Rom. i. 16. and having found it so to us.

Thirdly, It is a communicating ordinance: here are not only gospel truths represented to us, and confessed by us; but gospel benefits offered to us, and accepted by us; for it is not only a faithful faying, but well worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus died to fave finners, I Tim. i. 15. This is the explication which the apostle gives of this ordinance, I Cor. x. 16. "The cup of bleffing which we blefs," that is, which we pray to God to bless, which we bless God with and for, and in which we hope and expect that God will blefs us, it " is the communion (or the com-" munication) of the blood of Christ; the bread which "we break, is the communion, or communication, of " the body of Christ," which was not only broken for us upon the cross, when it was made an offering for sin but is broken to us, as the children's bread is broken

ken to the children in the everlasting gospel, wherein

it is made the food of fouls.

By the body and blood of Christ, which this ordinance is the communion of, we are to understand all those precious benefits and privileges, which were purchased for us by the death of Christ, and are assured to us upon gospel terms, in the everlasting covenant,

When the fun is faid to be with us, and we fay we have the fun, as in the day, as in the fummer, it is not the body and bulk of the fun that we have, but his rays and beams are darted down upon us, and by them we receive the light, warmth, and influence of the fun and thus the fun is communicated to us, according to the law of creation; fo in this ordinance we are partakers of Christ, Heb. iii 14. not of his real body and blood; it is fenfeless and absurd, unchristian and inhuman to imagine so; but of his merits and righteousness for our justification, his spirit and grace for our fancification. We must not dream of ascending up into heaven, or of going down to the depth to fetch Christ into this ordinance, that we may partake of him; no, the word is nigh thee, and Christ in the word, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8:

Unworthy receivers, that is, those who resolve to continue in fin, because grace hath abounded, partake of the guilt of Christ's body and blood, and have communion with those that crucified him; for, as much as in them lies, they erucify him afresh, Heb. vi. 6, What they do speaks such ill thoughts of Christ, that we may conclude, if they had been at Jerusalem when he was put to death, they would have joined with

those that cried, "Crucify him, crucify him."

But humble and penitent believers partake of the bleffed fruits of Christ's death; his "body and blood" are their food, their physic, their cordial, their life, their all. All the riches of the gospel are virtually in them.

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(1,) Christ and all his benefits are here communicated to us: here is not only bread and wine set before is to be looked at, but given to us to be eaten and lrunk; not only Christ made known to us, that we nay contemplate the mysteries of redemption, but Christ nade over to us, that we may participate of the besests of redemption. God in this ordinance, not only sure sus of the truth of the promise, but, according to ur present case and capacity, conveys to us by his Spirit, the good things promised; receive Christ Jesus the Lord, Christ and pardon, Christ and peace, Christ and race, Christ and heaven; it is all your own, if you ome up to the terms on which it is offered in the gospel.

Fountains of life are here broken up, wells of falation are here opened, the stone rolled away from he well's mouth, and you are called upon to come and draw water with joy; the well is deep, but this rdinance is a bucket by which it is easy to draw: it us not forfake these living streams for puddle waer. Breasts of consolation are here drawn out to us, som which we may suck and be satisfied. These are issued is gates, where we are appointed to wait for

isdom's gifts, and we shall not wait in vain.

(2.) Christ and all his benefits are here to be reived by us, If we do indeed answer the intention
the ordinance, in receiving the bread and wine, we
cept the offer that is made us; "Lord I take thee
thy word: be it unto thy servant according to it.
'e hereby interest ourselves in Christ's mediation
tween God and man, and take the benefit of it, acrding to the tenor of the everlassing gospel. Christ
this ordinance is graciously condescending to shew
the print of the nails, and the mark of the spear,
shew us his pierced hands, his pierced side, those
kens of his love and power as a Redeemer; we, by
rtaking of it, comply with his intentions, we consent
him, and close with him, saying, as Thomas did,
Iohn

John xx. 28. "My Lord, and my God." None but

Christ, none but Christ.

We do here likewife fet ourselves to participate of that spirtual strenth and comfort, which, through grace, flows into the hearts of believers from their in terest in Christ crucified. The gospel of Christ here folemply exhibited, is meat and drink to our fouls; it is bread that strengthens man's heart, and is the staff of life: it is wine that makes glad the heart and revive the spirits. Our spiritual life is supported and main tained, and the new man enabled for its work and confliets, by the spiritual benefits which here we commun nicate of, as the natural life, and the natural body, is by our necessary food. From the fulness that is in Christ crucified, we here derive grace for grace, grace for gracious exercifes, as the branches derive fap from the root, and as the lamps derive oil from the olive trees, Zech. iv. 11, 12. John i. 16. and fo, like healthful grown children, are nourished 'up in the words of faith and of good doctrine,' I Tim. iv. 6. 'till we all come to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' Thus it is our communion with, and communicating of Christ's body and blood

Fourthly, It is a covenanting ordinance. This cur our Saviour tells us, (that is, this ordinance,) is the New Testament, Luke xxii. 20. not only pertaining to the New Testament, but containing it; it hath the whole New Testament in it, and has the sum and sub stance of it: It is, in general, an instrument by which a right paffeth, and is conveyed; and a title to for good thing given. The gospel revelation of God grace and will, is both a testament and a covenan and the Lord's supper hath a reference to it as both

I. It is the New Testament. The everlasting go pel is Christ's last will, by which he hath given and b queathed a great estate to his family on earth, wit certain precepts and injunctions, and under certain introl.

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proviso's and limitations. This will is become of force, by the death of the Testator, Heb. ix. 16, 17. and is now unalterable; it is proved in the court of heaven, and administration given to the blessed Spirit, who is as the executor of the will; for of him the Testator said, John xvi. 14. 'He shall receive of mine. and shew it unto you.' Christ having purchased a great estate by the merit of his death, by his testament he left it to all his poor relations, that had need enough of it, and for whom he bought it; fo that all those who can prove themselves a kin to Christ, by their being born from above; John iii. 3. their partaking of a divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. and their doing the will of God, Matth. xii. 50. may claim the estate by virtue of the will, and shall be fure of a present maintenance, and a future inheritance out of it.

The Lord's Supper is the New Testament; it is not only a memorial of the testator's death, but it is the seal of the Testament. A true copy of it attested by this seal and pleadable, is hereby given into the hands of every believer, that he may have strong confolation. The general record of the New Testament, which is common to all, is hereby made particular.

(1.) The charge given by the will is hereby applied and enforced to us. The Testator hath charged us to remember him, hath charged us to follow him whithersoever he goes; he hath charged us to love one another, John xiii. 34. and the estate he hath lest us is so devised, as not to give any occasion to quarrel, but rather, to be a bond of union. He hath charged us to espouse his cause, serve his interest, and concern ourselves in his concernments in the world, to seek the welfare of the great body, and all the members of it. He hath likewise charged us to expect and prepare for his second coming: his world of command is, watch. Now, in the Lord's Supper, we are minded of this charge, and bound a fresh saithfully to observe what-

foever Christ hath commanded, as the Rechabites kept the command of their Father, Jer. xxxv. 6. 8.

The legacies left by the will, are hereby particularly configued to us; paid in part, and the rest fecured to be paid when we come to age, even at the time appointed by the Testator. What is left for us is not only sufficient to answer the full intention of the will enough for all, enough for each : but is left in good hands, in the hands of the Spirit of truth, who will not deal unfaithfully with us; for (as Christ tells us. John riv. 17.) We know him. Nay, Christ himself is rifen from the dead, to be the overfeer of his own will and to fee it duly executed: fo that we are in no danger of lofing our legacies, unless by our own default. Thefe are good fecurities, and what we may with abundant fatisfaction rely upon; and yet our Lord Jesus, 'more abundantly to shew the heirs of promife the immutability of his counfel, hath con-'firmed it by an oath,' (by a facrament, which is his oath to'us, as well as ours to him) that by all those 'immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to bie, we might have strong consolation,' that have ventured out all in the New Testament, Heb. vi. 18.

fovereign Lord and owner, and we are in his hand as the clay in the hand of the potter: yet he condescends to deal with us about our reconciliation and happiness in the way of a covenant, that they which are saved may be the more comforted, and they which perish may be rendered the more inexcusable. The tenor of this covenant is, Acts xvi. 31. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus 'Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Salvation is the great promise of the covenant, believing in Christ the great condition of the covenant; now this cup is the covenant, that is, it is the seal of the covenant. There seems to be an allusion to that solemnity, which we read of, Exod. xxiv. 7, 8. where Moses read the book

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of the covenant in the audience of the people, and the people declared their confent to it, faying, 'All that the Lord hath faid we will do, and will be obedient; and then Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it upon the people.' Part of it having before been fprinks led upon the alter, 'and faid, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you con-'cerning all these words.' Thus, the covenant being made by facrifice, Pfal. 1. v- and the blood of the facrifice being sprinkled both upon the altar of God, and upon the representatives of the people, both parties did, as it were, interchangeably put their hands and feals to the articles of agreement. So the blood of Christ having satisfied for the breach of the covenant of innocency, and purchased a new treaty, and being the facrifice by which the covenant is made, is fitly ealled the blood of the covenant. Having sprinkled this blood upon the altar in his intercession, when by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, he doth in this facrament sprinkle it upon the people; as the apostle explains this mystery, Heb. ix. 11. 20. A bargain is a bargain, though it be not fealed, but the scaling is the ratification and perfection of it. The internal feal of the covenant, as administered to true believers, is the spirit of promise, Eph. i. 13. whereby we are fealed to the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30. But the external feals of the covenant, as adminifired in the visible church, are the facraments, particularly this of the Lord's Supper. Scaling ordinances are appointed to make our covenanting with God the more folemn, and confequently the more affecting, and the impressions of it the more abiding. The covenant of grace is a covenant never to be forgotten, Jer. 1. 4. This ordinance, therefore, was inflituted to affore us, that God will never forget it, and to affift us, that we never may forget it. It is the feal of the new covenant; that is, sofold broken 8 of stax board to base

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(1.) God

(1.) God doth in, and by this ordinance, feal to us. to be to us a God. This article of the covenant is inclusive of all the rest; in giving himself to us to be ours, he gives us all things, for he is God all-fufficient. This is the grant, the royal grant which the eternal God here feals, and delivers to true believers as his act and deed. He gives himfelf to them, and empowers them to call him theirs. What God is in himfelf, he will be to them for their good. His wisdom theirs, to counsel and direct them; his power theirs, to protect and support them; his justice theirs, to justify them; his holiness theirs, to fanctify them; his good less theirs, to love and supply them; his truth is the inviolable feaurity of the promife. and his eternity the perpetuity of their happiness. He will be to them a Father, and they shall be his sons and daughtens, dignified by the privileges of adoption, and diftinguished by the Spirit of adoption. Their maker is their husband, and he hath faid, that he is married to them, and rejoiceth in them as the bridegroom in his bride, Ha. Ixii. 4. 5. The Lord is their shepherd, and the theep of his passure shall not want. He is the portion of their inheritance in the other world, as well as of their cup in this; he hath prepared for them a city, and thereby is not assamed to be called their God, Heb. xi. 16. Compare Luke xx. 37.

(2.) We do in and by this ordinance, seal to him to be to him a people. We accept the relation by our voluntary choice and consent, and bind our souls with a hand, that we will approve ourselves to him in the relation. We hereby resign, surrender, and give up our whole selves, body, soul, and spirit to God the Father, Son, and Holy Chost: covenanting, and promising that we will by his strength serve him saithfully, and walk closely with him in all manner of gospelobedience all our days. Claiming the blessings of the covenant, we put ourselves under the bonds of the covenant, we put ourselves under the bonds of the

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God here sensed

O Lord, truly I am thy fervant, I am thy fervant.; wholly, and only, and for ever thine. And this is the meaning of this fervice. The way and struct

## C H A P.

## An Invitation to this Ordinance 300 303

LENTIFUL and fuitable provision is made in this ordinance out of the treasures of the Redeemer's grace; and ministers, as fervants, are fent to bid to the feast, to invite those that the master of the feast hath defigned for his guests, and to hasten those that are invited to this banquet of wine, alluding to Efth. vi. 14. Wildom hath fent forth her maidens on this errand, and they have words put in their mouths, Luke xiv. 17. 'Come, for all things are now ready?' This is our meffage:

Firft. We are to tell you that all things are ready, now ready: he that hath an ear, let him hear this. All things are now ready in the gospel-feast, that are proper for, or will contribute to the full fatisfaction of an immortal foul, that knows its own nature and interest, and defires to be trully and eternally happy

in the love and favour of its Creator.

1/t, All things are ready; all things requifite to 2: noble feast. Let us a little improve the metaphor.

(1.) There is a house ready for the entertainment of the guests, the gospel church, wisdom's house, which the hath built upon feven pillars, Prov. ix. r. God hath fet up his tabernacle among men, and the place of his tent is enlarged, and made capacious ehough; fo that though the table has been replenished with yet guests, still there is room, Luke xiv. 22.

(2.) There is a table ready spread in the word and prdinances, like the table in the temple on which the

shew bread was placed, a loaf for every tribe. The feripture is written, the cannon of it compleated, and in it a full declaration made of God's good-will to.

wards men, which he that runs may read.

(3.) There is a laver ready for us to wash in. As at the marriage feast at Cana, there were six water pots set for purisheation, John ii. 6. Lest sense of pollutions contracted should deter us from the participation of these comforts, behold there is a sountain opened, Zech. xiii. 1. Come and wash in it, that being purged from an evil concience by the blood of Jesus, you may, with humble considence, compass God's altar.

(4.) There are servants ready to attend you, and those are the ministers, whose work it is to direct you to the table, and, 'to give to every one their portion 'of meat in due season, rightly dividing the word of 'truth.' They are not masters of the feast, but only slewards, and 'your servants for Christ's sake,' 2 Convi. 5.

(5.) There is a deal of company already some; many have accepted the invitation, and have found a hearty welcome: Why then should your place be compty? Let the communion of saints invite you into

communion with Christ.

(6.) A bleffing is ready to be craved. He is ready that is to blefs the facrifice, I Sam. ix. 13. The great high priest of our profession, ever living to interced for us, and attending continually to this very thing, it ready to command a bleffing upon our spiritual food.

(7.) The master of the seast is ready to bid you welcome, as ready as the father of the prodigal was to receive his repenting, returning son, whom he saw when 'he was yet a great way off,' Luke xv. 20 God's ear is open to hear, and his hand open to give Isa. lxv. 24.

(8.) The provision is ready for your entertainment. All things are ready, (1.) For our justifica

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tion: divine justice is fatisfied, an everlasting righteousness is brought in: an act of indemnity hath pastfed the royal affent, and a pardon office is erected. where all that can make it appear that they are interested in the general act, may sue out their particular charter of pardon. There's a plea ready, an advocate ready; 'Behold he is near that justifieth us. Ifa. 1. 8.(2.) For our fanctification; their's a fulness of grace in Christ, from which we may all receive. The word of grace is ready as the means, the Spirit of grace is ready as the Author; every thing ready for the mortifying of fin, the confirming of faith, and our furtherance in holiness. (3.) For our confolation; a well of living water is ready, if we can but fee it: peace is left us for a legacy, which we may claim if we will; promifes are given us for our support, which, if we have not the benefit of, it is our own fault. There is fomething in the new covenant to obviate every grief, every challenge, every fear, if we will use it. (4.) For our falvation, ready to be revealed, I Pet. i. 5. angels upon the wing are ready to convey us: Jesus standing at the the Father's right hand is ready to receive us; the many mansions are ready prepared for us. "All things are ready."

2dly, All things are now ready, just now, for 'Be-

'hold now is the accepted time, 2 Cor. vi. 2.

(i.) All things are now readier than they were under the law. Grace then lay more hid than it doth now, when life and immortality are brought to so clear a light by the gospel. Christ in a sacrament is much readier than Christ in a sacrifice.

(2.) All things are now readier than they will be shortly, if we trifle away the present season. Now the door of mercy stands open, and we are invited to come and enter; but it will shortly be shut. Now the golden sceptre is held out, and we are called to come and touch the top of it; but it will be otherwise when the

the days of our probation are numbered and finished, and he that now faith, "Come for a bleffing," will

fay, "Depart with a curse."

Secondly, We must call you to come; this is now the call, Come, come: 'the Spirit faith, Come: and 'the bride faith, Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. Come to Christ in the first place, and then come to this ordinance.

All things are ready, be not you unready.

This exhortation must be directed to three sorts of persons; (1.) Those who are utterly unmeet for this ordinance, must be exhorted to qualify themselves, and then come. (2.) Those, who through grace are in some measure meet for this ordinance, must be exhorted speedily to enter themselves. 3. Those who have entered themselves, must be exhorted to be constant in their attendance upon it.

First, I must apply myself to those that by their ignorance, prosances, irreligion, or reigning worldlines, put a bar in their own way, and may not be admitted to this ordinance. If these lines should fall under the eye of any such, let them know I have a message to them from God, and I must deliver it, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

Dott thou live a carnal wicked life, in the fervice of fin and Satan, without fear, and without God in the world? Light is come into the world, and dost thou love darkness rather, not knowing nor desiring to know the way of the Lord, and the judgment of thy God? Art thou a drunkard, a swearer, a sabbath-breaker? Art thou an adulterer fornicator, or unclean person? Art thou a liar, a deceiver a railer, or a contentious person? Are thou a mere drudge to the world, or a slave to any base lust? Doth thy own conscience tell thee, Thou art the man, or would it not tell thee so, if thou wouldst suffer it to deal saithfully with thee?

(1.) Know then, that thou hast no part nor lot in

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this matter: while thou continues thus, thou art not an invited guest to this feast; the fervants dare not bid thee welcome, for they know the Master will not. but will ask thee, ' Friend, How camest thou in this ther? What hast thou to do to take God's covenant, and the feal of it, into thy mouth, feeing thou hatest instruction? Pfal. 1. 6. &c. Read that scripture, and hear God speaking to thee in it. 'It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs.' Thou art forbidden to touch these sacred things with hine unhallowed hands: for, 'What communion hath Christ with Belial? If thou throst thyself pon this ordinance, while thou continuest under such character, instead of doing honour to the Lord efus, thou puttest a daring affront upon him, as if he vere altogether fuch an one as thyself; instead of etching in any true comfort to thine own foul, thou oft but aggravate thy guilt and condemnation; thy leart will be more hardened, thy conscience more eared, Satan's strong holds more fortified, and thou atest and drinkest judgment to thyself, not discernng the Lord's body; nor puttest a difference between his bread and other bread; but trampling under bot the blood of the covenant as a profane and comon thing.

(2.) Know also that thy condition is very miserable shile thou debarrest thyself from this ordinance, and rt, as polluted, put from this priest-hood. How light oever thou mayest make of it, this is not of thy shoredoms, this is not of thy miseries a small matter, hat thou shuttest thyself out of covenant and commusion with the God that made thee: and, in effect, dislaimest any interest in the Christ that bought thee, s if thou hadst taken the devil's words out of their souths, 'What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Son of God? And, if thou persist in it, so shall thy soom be, thou thyself hast decided it. If now it be as

the fire that confer the grant

nothing to thee to be separated from the sheep Christ, and excluded from their green pastures, yet will be fomething shortly, when thou shalt according ly have thy place amongst the goats, and thy lot wit them for ever. Thou thinkest it no loss now to wan the cup of bleffing, because thou preferrest the cup drunkenness before the it; but what dost thou this of the cup of trembling, that will ere long be put in thy hand, if thou repent not. Thou hast no desire the wine of the love of God, but chusest the pudd water of fenfual pleafures rather; but canft thou 'drin of the wine of the wrath of God,' which shall b poured out without mixture in the presence of the Lamb, Rev. xiv. 10. Thou thinkest thyself easy an happy that thou art not under the bonds and checks this ordinance; but, dost thou not fee thyfelf extreme ly miserable, while thou hast no right to the bleffin and comforts of this ordinance? If there were n another life after this, thou mightest have some color for the bleffing thyfelf thus in thine own wicked way (and yet, if fo, I should fee no cause to envy thee but, wretched foul, 'What wilt thou do in the de of vilitation? Thou that herdest thyself with the finners in Zion, and chusest them for thy people in ' Canst thou dwell with devouring fire? Canst the ' inhabit everlasting burnings?' Ha. xxxiii. 14. Godb his grace open thine eyes, and give thee to fee th mifery and danger before it be too late.

(3.) Yet know, that though thy condition is ver fad, it is not desperate. Thou hast space yet give thee to repent, and grace offered thee! O refuse no that grace slip not that space. Leave thy fins, an give turn unto God in Christ; cast away from thee all the trangressions, make thee a new heart, begin a new list for forsake the sociss, and live to some purpose, and goe in the way of understanding; and then in wisdom name, I am to tell thee, that notwithstanding all the

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rmer follies, thou are welcome to her house, welme to her table, freely welcome to eat of her pread, and to drink of the wine which she hath mingled,' Prov. ix. 4, 5, 6. Now at least, now at last, n this thy day, know the things that belong to thy beace;' be wife for thyself, be wife for thine own

al, and cheat not thyfelf into thine own ruin.

Poor finner! I pity thee, I would gladly help thee; e Lord pity thee, and help thee! He will, if thou It pity thyfelf, and help thyfelf. Wilt thou be peraded by one that wishes thee well, to exchange the vice of fin, which is perfect flavery, for the fervice. God, which is perfect liberty? To exchange the fe and fordid pleasures of a sensual life, wich level e with thee beafts, for the pure and refined pleares of a spiritual and divine life, which will raise e to a communion with the holy angels? I am conwake, shake thyself from the dust, loose thyself om the bands of thy neck,' Ifa. lii. 2. Give up thyde it with him; thou shalt then have in this ordinance the pledges of his favour, affurances of thy reconcilia-ple to him, and acceptance with him and all shall be I, for it shall end everlastingly well. db

Secondly, I must next apply myself to those who, ring competent knowledge in the things of God, and king a justifiable profession of Christ's holy religion, not be denied admission to this ordinance, and yet ive by themselves the benefit and comfort of it. Such hereby exhorted, without further delay, folemnly give up their names to the Lord Jesus in and by s facrament. Hear Hezekiah's fummons to the life fover, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. 'Yield yourselves unto phrase is; join yourselves to him in the bond of

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the covenant, and then exchange the ritifications, enter into the fanctuary. First give your ownselves unto the Lord, and then confirm the surrender by the

folemnity of this ordinance.

ple that were in their infancy baptized into the Christian faith, and have been well educated in the knowledge of God, and of his holy ways, and are now grown up to years of discretion, are capable of understanding what they do, of discerning between their right hand and their left in spiritual things, and of chusing and resusing for themselves accordingly; and that have had some good impressions made upon their souls by divine things, and some good inclinations towards God and Christ, and heaven: such are invited to the table of the Lord, and called upon to come, for all things are now ready, and it is not

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You that are young, will you now be prevailed with to be ferious, and refolved for God? You now begin to act with reason, and to put away childish things; you are come to be capable of confidering, and you are thinking how you must live in this world: O that I could prevail with you to think first how you may live for another world! I am not perfuading you to come rashly and carelesly to the Lord's table, as when you were little children, you went to church for falhion's fake, and because your parents took you with them: but I am perfuading you, now in the days of your youth, from a deep conviction of your duty and interest, and a ferious concern about your fouls and eternity, intelligently, deliberately, and with a fixed resolution, to join yourselves unto the Lord in an everlasting covenant, and then to come and feal that covenant at his table. You are now come to the turning time of life, to those years when ordinary people fix for their whole lives; I beg of you for Christ's

Christ's sake, and for your own precious soul's sake, that now you will turn to God, and fix for him, and set your faces heaven-wards.

Come and let us reason together a little, and I be-

feech you to reason with yourselves.

(1.) Are you not by baptism given up unto the Lord? Are not the vows of God already upon you? Is not your baptism your honour? Is it not your comfort? It is so; but you are unworthy of that honour, unworthy of that comfort, if, when you arrive to a capacity for it, you decline doing that for yourfelves, which was done for you when you were baptized. How can you expect that your parents dedication of you to God then, should avail you any thing, if you do not now make it your own act and deed? Might not your backwardness to confirm the covenant, by this folemn taking of it upon yourselves, be construed as an implicit renunciation of it, and be adjudged a forseiture of the benefit of it? I believe you would not for a world disclaim your baptism, nor disown the obligation of it; you will not, I am confident you will not throw off your Christianity, nor join with those that fay, we have no part in David, nor inheritance in the fon of David. Come then and ratify your baptism, either let these articles be cancelled, or now, you are of age, come and feal them yourselves; either stand to the bargain, or fay you will not; either be Christians complete, Christians by your own confent, or not Christians at The matter is plain; the bonds of both the facraments are the same : you are under the bonds of the one, which I know you dare not renounce; therefore come under the bonds of the other. Confider, take advice, and speak your minds.

(2.) How can you dispose of yourselves better now in the days of your youth, than to give up yourselves unto the Lord? These are your chusing days; you are now chusing other settlements, in callings, rela-

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tions, and places of abode; why should you not now chuse this settlement in the service of God, which will make all your other settlements comfortable? Chuse you therefore this day whom you will serve; God, or the world, Christ, or the slesh; and be persuaded to bring the matter to a good issue; determine the debate in that happy resolve which the people of Irael came to, when they said, 'Nay but we will serve the Lord,' Josh. xxiv. 21. Why should not he, who is the first and the best have the first and best of your days? Which I am sure you cannot bestow better, and which it is both your duty and interest to bestow thus.

(3.) What will you get by delaying it? You intend fome time or other folemnly to give up yourselves unto the Lord in this ordinance, and you hope then to receive the benefit and comfort of it; but the tempter tells you 'Tis all good in time, and you difmiss your convictions as Felix did Paul, Acts xxiv. 25. with a promife, that 'at a more convenient feafon you will fend for them." You are ready to fay, as the people did, Hag. 1. 2. 'the time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built; ' you think you must build your own first: and what comes of those delays? Satan, ere you are aware, get advantage by them, and cozens you of all your time, by cozening you of the prefent time; your hearts are in danger of being hardened, the Spirit of grace may hereby be provoked to withdraw, and firive no more; and what will become of you, if death furprize you before your great work be done?

(4.) What better provision can you make for a comfortable life in this world, than by doing this great work betimes? you are fetting out in a world of temptations more than you think of; and how can you better arm yourselves against them, than by coming up to that fixed resolution which will silence the tempter, with 'Get thee behind me Satan?' When

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Namoi faw that Ruth was 'stedfastly resolved, she lest 'off speaking to her.' The counsel of the ungodly will not be so apt to court you to the way of sinners, and the seat of the scornful, when you have avowed yourselves set out in the way of God, and seated already at the table of the Lord. You are launching sorth into a stormy sea, and this will surnish you with balast; your way lies through a vale of tears, and therefore you have need to be well stocked with comforts: and where can you stock yourselves better than in this ordinance, which seals all the promises of the new covenant, and conveys all the happiness included in them?

And now, shall I gain this point with young people? Will they be perfuaded betimes to resolve for God and heaven? 'Remember thy Creator, remember thy Redeemer in the days of thy youth: and then it is to be hoped thou wilt not forget them, nor wilt they forget thee, when thou art old.

The state of the s adly. Let me address this exhortation to those whose inclinations are good, and their conversation blameless, but their desires are weak, and their affect tions cool and indifferent, and therefore they keep off from this ordinance. This is the character of very many who are honest, but they want zeal and resolution enough to bring them under this engagment. They can give no tolerable reason why they do not come to the facrament: it may be they have bought a piece of ground, or a yoke of oxen, their hands are full of the world, and they are too bufy, they are unfettled, or not fettled to their minds, and this makes them uneafy, and they hope that therefore they may be excused; but the true reason is, they are sothful and dilatory, and the things that remain are ready to die; they cannot find in their hearts to take pains, the pains they know, they must take in a work of this pature; they are not willing to be bound to that

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stricking care and watchfulness, which this facrament will oblige them to: they will be as they are, and make no advances: they have hid their hand in their bosom, and it grieves them to bring it to their mouth again, i. e. they will not be at the pains to feed themselves,

Prov. xxvi. 15.

What shall we say to rouze these sluggards? to perfusde them to press torward in their profession, forgetting the things that are behind, and not resting in them! Hear ye virgins, that slumber and sleep, and let your lamps ly by neglected, hear the cry, ' Behold the Bridegroom cometh,' cometh in this ordinance, to espouse you to himself; stir up yourselves, 'and go ye forth to meet him.' Hear ye fervants, ye flothful fervants, your Master's voice, 'How long wilt thou fleep, O fluggard?' Is it not high time to awake out of fleep, and apply thyfelf more closely and viger. oully to the business of a Christian,? Is it not far in the day with thee, perhaps the fixth hour, or further on, dinner time: and yet hast thou no appetite to this spritual feast, to which thou art invited? Thou haft loft a great deal of time already, should not thou now think of redeeming time for thy foul and eternity? And how can that be better done, than by improving fuch advantageous opportunities as facraments are? Hear that call to careless and trifling professors, as if thou thyself wert called by name in it, Eph. v. 14. 'Awake, thou that fleepest, and rise from ' the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'

(1.) Consider what an affront you put upon the Lord Jesus, while you live in the neglect of this ordinance; you contemn his authority, who hath given this command to all his disciples (and among them you reckon yourselves) 'Do this in remembrance of me. And is it nothing to live in the omission of a known duty, and in disobedience to an express precept? Is the law of Christ nothing with you? If you

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to do good, and do it not, is it not fin? Is not this as much an ordinance of Christ, as the word and prayer? You would not live without them, nor would you be yourselves, or suffer your children to be without baptism: Why then is this neglected? you arraign Christ's wisdom: he instituted this ordinance for your spiritual good, your strength and nourishment; and you think you need it not, you can do as well without it: this appointment you think, might have been spared, that is, you think yourselves wiler than Christ. You likewise hereby put a great slight upon the grace and love of Christ, which hath made fuch rich provision for you, and given you so kind an invitation to it.

This is excellently well urged in the public form of invitation to the holy communion, which warns those that are fcandalous to keep off in thele words: If any of you be a blasphemer of God, a hinderer or slanderer of his word, an adulterer, or be in malice or envy, or in an other grievous crime; repent you of your fins, or else come not to that holy table; lest after the taking of that holy facrament, the devil enter into you, as he entered into Judas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to destruction of

both body and foul.'
But the other exhortation stirs up those that are negligent, in these words: 'Ye know how grievous and unkind a thing it is, when a man hath prepared a rich feast, decked his table with all kind of provi-' fon, fo that there lacketh nothing but the guests to fit 'down, and yet they who are called (without any cause) most unthankfully refuse to come: Which of you in fuch a case would not be moved? Who would not think it a great injury and wrong done unto him? Wherefore, most dearly beloved in Christ, take ye good heed left ye, withdrawing yourselves from this holy supper, provoke God's indignation against you.

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It is an easy matter for a man to say, I will not communicate, because I am otherwise hindered with worldly business, but such excuses are not so easily accepted and allowed before God. If any may say, I am a grievous sinner, and therefore am asraid to come; wherefore then do ye not repent and amend? When God calleth you, are ye not ashamed to say, Ye will not come? When ye should return to God, will you excuse yourselves, and say, You are not ready? Consider earnessly with yourselves, how little such seigned excuses will avail before God. They that resuled the seast in the gospel, because they had bought a sarm, or would try their yokes of oxen, or because they were married, were not so excused, but

counted unworthy of the heavenly feast.'

(2) Confider what an injury you hereby do to your own fouls. You know not what you lose while you live in the neglect of this ordinance. If you be deprived of opportunities for it, that is an affliction, but not a fin; and, in fuch a case, while you lament the want of it, and keep up defires after it, and improve the other helps you have, you may expect that God will make up the want fome other way; though we are tied to ordinances, God is not; but if you have opportunities for it, and yet neglect it, and when it is to be administred, turn your back upon it, you ferve your fouls fo as you would not ferve your bedies; for you deny them their necessary food, and the foul that is flarved is as certainly murdered as the body that is stabbed, and his blood shall be required at thy hands. No man ever yet hated his own fest, but nourisheth and cherisheth it; yet thou deniest thine own foul that which would nourish and cherish it, and thereby shewest how little thou level it. If thou didft duly attend on this ordinance, and improve it aright, thou would't find it of unspeakable afe to thee for the strengthening of thy faith, the exciting

citing of holy affections in thee, and thy furtherance in every good word and work. So that to thy neglect of it, thou hast reason to impute all thy weakness, and all the strength and prevalency of thy temptations; all the unsteadiness of thy resolutions, and all the unevenness of thy conversation. How can we expect the defired end, while we perfift in the neglect of the

appointed means?

Think not to fay within yourselves, we are not clean, furely we are not clean, therefore we come not to the feast. If you are not, why are you not? Is there not a fountain opened? Have you not been many a time called to wash you and make you clean? You are unready, and therefore you excuse yourselves from coming: but, is not your unreadiness your fin ! And will one fin justify you in another? Can a man's offence be his defence? You think you are not serious enough, nor devout enough, nor regular enough in your conversations to come to the sacrament; and perhaps you are not: but why are you not? What hinders you? Is any more required to fit you for the facrament, than is necessary to fit you for heaven? And dare you live a day in that condition, in which, if you die, you will be rejected and excluded as unmeet for heaven! Be perfuaded therefore to put on the wedding garment, and then come to the wedding feast. Instead of making your unreadiness an argument against coming to this ordinance, make the neceffity of your coming to this ordinance an argument against your unreadiness. Say not, I am too light, airy, too much addicted to fport and pleasures; am linked to close in vain and carnal company, or plunged too deep in worldly care and business, and therefore I must be excused from attending this ordinance; for this is to make ill worse: but rather fay, It is necesfary I come to the Lord's Supper, and come in a right manner; my foul withers and languishes, dies and

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and perifhes if I do not; and therefore I must break of this vain and fenfual course of life which unfits me for. and indisposes me to that ordinance: therefore I mult disentangle myself from that society, and difengage myself from that encumbrance, whatever it is which cools pious affections, and quenches that coal. Shake off that, whatever it is, which comes between you and the comfort and benefit of this ordinance: dally no longer in a matter of fuch vast moment, but speedily come to that resolution, Plat. cxix. 115. Depart from me ye evil doers, and evil doings; for I will

keep the commandment of my God.

adly, Let me address this exhortation to those whose delires are strong towards the Lord, and towards the remembrance of his name in this ordinance: but they are timerous, and are kept from it by prevailing fears. This is the case of many, who, we hope, fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his fervant, but they walk in darkness, and have no light. Ifa. 1. 10. who follow Christ, but they follow him trembling. Ask them why they do not come to this facrament, and they'll tell you they dare not come, they are unworthy, they have no faith, no comfort in God, no hope of heaven; and therefore, if they should come, they should 'eat and drink judgment to themfelves.' They find not in themselves that fixedness of thought, the flame of pious and devout affections which they think should be; and, because they cannot come as they should, they think it better to stay away. What is faid for the conviction and terror of hypocrites and prefumptuous finners, notwithstanding our care to diffinguish between the precious and the vile, they misapply to themselves: and so the heart of the righteous, is made fad, which should not be made fad. We are commanded to 'ftrengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; to fay to them that are of a fearful heart, be ftrong, fear not.' Ifa. xxxv. 3, But

4. But wherewith shall we comfort such, whose souls many times result to be comforted? If we tell them of the infinite mercy and goodness of God, the merit and righteousness of Christ, the precious promises of the covenant: their jealous hearts reply, All this is nothing to them; the Lord, they think hath sorgotten them, their God hath sorsaken them, and 'utterly separated' them from his people; as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart,' Prov. xxxv. 20.

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> But, O ye of little faith, who thus doubt, would you not be made whole? Would not you be strengthened? Is it not a desirable thing to attain to such a piece and serenity of mind, as that you may come with a humble holy boldness to this precious ordinance?

For your help then, take these two cautions,

(1.) Judge not amiss concerning yourselves. As it is a damning mistake, common among the children of men, to think their spiritual state and condition to be good, when it is very bad; for, 'there is that maketh 'himself rich, and yet bath nothing;' so it is a disquieting mistake, common among the children of God, to think their spiritual state and condition to be bad, when it is very good: for, 'there is that maketh him-'self poor, and yet hath great riches,' Prov. xiii. 7. But it is a mistake, which I hope, by the grace of God, may be rectified: and though a full affurance is marely attained to, and we ought always to keep up a godly jealoufy over ourselves, and a holy sear, lest we feem to come short: yet such good hope through grace, as will enable us to rejoice in God, and go on cheerfully in our work and duty, is what we should aim at, and labour after, and which we ought not to deny ourselves the comfort of, when God by his grace hath given us cause for it. Wherever there is such a ferious concern about the foul, and another world, as produceth a holy fear, even that gives ground for a lively hope.

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You think you have no grace, because you are not yet persect; but why should you look for that on earth, which is to be had in heaven only? A child will at length be a man, though, as yet, he 'think as a 'child, and speak as a child.' Blessed Paul himself had not yet attained, nor was already persect, Phil. iii. 12. Gold in the ore is truly valuable, though it be not yet refined from its dross, 'Despise not the day of small 'things,' for God doth not, Zech. vi. 10. Deny not that power and grace which hath brought you ought of the land of Egypt, though you be not yet come to Canaan.

You think you have no grace, because you have not that sensible joy and comfort which you would have; but those are spiritually enlightened who see their own deformity, as well as those that see Christ's beauty. 'The child that cries is as sure alive as the 'child that laughs.' Complaints of spiritual burdens are the language of the new nature, as well as praises

for fpiritual bleffings.

Drooping foul, thou art, under grace, and not un der the law; and therefore judge of thyfelf by the measures of grace, and not by those of the law. Thou hast to do with one that is willing to make the best of thee, and will accept the willingness of the spirit, and pardon the weakness of our flesh. Take thy work before thee, therefore, and let not the penitent humble fense of thy own follies and corruptions eclipse the evidence of God's graces in thee, nor let the diffidence of thyself shake thy confidence in Christ. Thank God for what he has done for thee : let him have the praise of it, and then thou shalt have the joy of its And this is certain, either thou hast an interest in Christ, or thou mayst have. If thou doubt therefore whether Christ be thine, put the matter out of doubt by a present consent to him; I take Christ to be mine, wholly only, and for ever mine: Christ upon his own terms, Christ upon any terms.

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(2.) Judge not amiss concerning this ordinance. It was instituted for your comfort, let it not be a terror to you; it was instituted for your satisfaction, let it not be your amazement. Most of the messages from heaven which we meet with in scripture, delivered by angels, began with, Fear not; and particularly that to the women which attended Christ's sepulchre, Matth. xxviii. 5. 'Fear not ye; tor I know that ye seek Jesus,' and do not you seek him? Be not asraid then. Chide yourselves for, chide yourselves out of, these disquieting sears which steal away your spear, and your cruse of water, I Sam xvi. 12. rob you both of your strength and of your comfort.

You say you are unworthy to come; so were all that ever came, not unworthy to be called children, nor to eat of the children's bread; in yourselves there is no worthiness; but is there none in Christ? Is not he worthy, and is not he your's? Have you not chosen him? Appear therefore before God in him. Let saith in his hediation silence all your sears, and dismiss their clamours with that, 'But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.'

You fay you dare not come, lest ye should eat and wink judgment to yourselves; but ordinarily, those hat most sear that, are least in danger of it. That treadful word was not intended to drive men from the acrament, but to drive them from their sins. Can you not say, through grace you hate sin, you strive gainst it, you earnestly desire to be delivered from it? Then certainly your league with it is broken; though the Canaanites be in the land, you do not make mariages with them. Come then and seal the covenant with God, and you shall be so far from eating and brinking judgment to yourselves, that you shall eat and drink life and comfort to yourselves.

You dare not come to this facrament, yet you dare ray, you dare hear the word, I know you dare not eglect either the one or the other; and what is the

facrament

facrament but the doing the same thing by a visible sign, which is and ought to be done in effect by the word and prayer? Nor ought we to put such an amazing distance between this and other ordinances. If we pray in hypocrify, our prayers are an abomination: if we hear the word and reject it, it is a savour of death unto death; shall we therefore not pray, not hear? God forbid. Commanded duty must be done; appointed means must be used: and that which dissits and hinders us must be removed, and we must in since rity give up ourselves to serve God; do as well as we can, and be forry we can do no better; and then having an high priest, which is touched with the seeling of our infirmities, we may come boldly to the throne of grace, and to this table of grace.

You fay, your faith is weak, pious affections are cool and low, your refolutions unfteady, and therefore you keep away from this ordinance. That is, as if a man should fay, he is sick, and therefore he will take no physic; he is empty, and therefore he'll take no food; he is faint, and therefore he'll take no cordials; this ordinance was appointed chiefly for the relief of such as you are; for the strengthening of faith, the enslaming of holy love, and the confirming of good resolutions: in God's name therefore use it for those purposes; pine not away in thy weakness while God has ordained thee strength; perish not for hunger, while there is bread enough in thy Father's house, and to spare; die not for thirst, while there is a well

of water by thee. We leavened od st

Thirdly. This chapter must conclude with an exhortation to those that have given up their name to the Lord in this ordinance, and have sometimes scaled their covenant with God in it, but they come very seldom to it, and allow themselves in the neglect and omission of it. Frequent opportunities they have for it, slated meals provided for them, the table spread

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and furnished. Others come, and they are invited; but time after time they let it slip, and turn backs upon it, framing to themselves some forry excuse or other to shift it off.

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(1.) How powerful the engagements are, which we ly under, to be frequent and conflant in our attendance on the Lord in this ordinance? It is plainly intimated in the institution, that the solemnity is oft to be repeated; for it is faid, 'Do this, as oft as ye 'drink it, in remembrance of me.' Baptism is to be administered but once, because it is the door of admission, and we are but once to enter in by that door; but the Lord's supper is the table in Christ's family. at which we are to eat bread continually, alluding to 2 Sam. ix. 13. The law of Moles prescribed how oft. the passover must be celebrated under very severe penalties; but the gospel being a dispensation of a greater love and liberty, only appoints us to observe its paffover oft, and then leaves it to our own ingemuity and prous affections to fix the time, and determine how oft. If a deliverance out of Egypt merited an annual commemoration, furely our redemption by Christ merits a more frequent one, especially since we need not go up to ferufalem to do it. If this tree of life, which bears more than twelve manner of fruits, yieldeth her fruit to us every month, Rev. xxii. 2. I know not why we should neglect it any month. Where there is the truth of grace, this ordinance ought to be improved which, by virtue of the divine appointment, has a moral influence upon our growth in grace. The great Master of the family would have none of his children milling at meal-time.

While we are often finning, we have need to be often receiving the seal of our pardon; because, though the sacrifice be perfect, and 'able to perfect for ever 'them which are sanctified,' so that that needs never to

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be repeated: yet the application of it being imperfect, (ad modum recipients) has need to be often made afresh. The worthipper, though once purged, having still consciences of sins in this defective state, Heb. x. 2. they must oft have recourse to the sountain opened for the purging of their consciences, from the pollutions contracted daily by dead works, to serve the living God, Heb. ix. 14. Even he that is wasted thus, needs to wash his seet, or he cannot be easy, John xiii. 10.

While we are often in temptation, we have need to be often renewing our covenants with God, and fetching strength from heaven for our spiritual conflicts. Frequent fresh recruits and fresh supplies, are necessary for those that are so closely besieged, and are so vigorously attacked by a potent adversary. He improves all advantages against us, therefore it is our wisdom not to neglect any advantage against him, and

particularly not this ordinance.

While we are often labouring under great coldness and deadness of affection towards divine things, we need oft to use those means which are proper to kindle that holy fire, and keep it burning. We find, by sad experience, that our coal from the altar is soon quenched, our thoughts grow flat and low, and unconcerned about the other world, by being so much conversant with this; we have therefore need to be often celebrating the memorial of Christ's death and sufferings, than which nothing can be more affecting to a Christian, nor more proper to raise and refine the thoughts: it is a subject that more than once has made the disciples 'hearts to burn within them,' Luke xxiv. 32.

Much of our communion with God is kept up by the renewing of our covenant with him, and the frequent interchanging of folemn assurances. It is not superfluous, but highly serviceable, both to our holiness and our comfort, oft to present ourselves to God 1

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as living facrafices, alive from the dead. It is a token of Christ's favour to us and must not be slighted, that he not only admits, but invites us oft to repeat this folemnity, and is ready again to seal to us, if we be but ready to seal to him. Jonathan, therefore, caused David to swear again, because he loved him, I Sam. xx. 17. And an honest mind will not startle at assurances. Fast bind, saft find.

(2.) Consider how poor the excuses are, with which men commonly justify themselves in this neglect. They let slip many an opportunity of attending upon the Lord in this ordinance, and why do they?

Perhaps they are fo full of worldly bulinels, that they have neither time nor a heart for that close application to the work of a facrament which they know is requifite; the shop must be attended, accounts must he kept, debts owing them must be got in, and debts they owe must be paid: it may be, some affair of more than ordinary difficulty and importance is upon their hands, which they are in care about the iffue of; and till that be over, they think it not amis to withdraw from the Lord's supper. And is this thy excuse? Weigh it in the balances of the sanctuary then, and consider, Is any business more necessary than the doing of thy duty to God, and the working out of thine own falvation? Thou art careful and troubled about many things! but is not this the one thing needful, to which every thing elfe fhould be obliged to give way? Dost thou not think thy worldly butiness would prosper and succeed the better for thy care about the main matter? If it were left at the bottom of the hill, while thou comest hither to worthip, mightest thou not return to it with greater hopes to speed in it? And dost thou not spare time from thy bufiness for things of much less moment than this? Thou wilt find time as bufy as thou art, to cat, and drink, and fleep, and converse with thy friends; and E 2 is

is not the nourishment of thy soul, its repose in God, and communion with him, much more necessary. I

dare fay, thou wilt own it is.

If indeed thou canst not allow so much time for so. lemn fecret worship in preparation for this Ordinance, and reflection upon it, as others do, and as thou thyfelf femetime haft done, and wouldst do, yet let not that keep thee from the ordinance: thy heart may be in heaven, when thy hands are about the world; and a ferious Christian may, through God's assistance, do a great deal of work in a little time. If the hours, that should be thus employed, be trifled away in that which is idle and impertinent, it is our fin; but if they be forced, out of our hands by necessary and unvoidable avocations, it is but our affliction, and ought not to hinder us from the ordinance. The less time we have for preparation, the more close and intent we should be in the ordinance itself, and so make up the lofs. A welcome guest never comes unseasonably to one that always keeps a good house.

But if indeed, thy heart is so set upon the world, so silled with the cares of it, and so eager in the pursuits of it, that thou hast no mind to the comforts of this ordinance; no spirit nor life for the business of it, surely thou hast left thy first love, and thou hast most need of all to come to this ordinance for the recovery of the ground thou hast lost. Dost thou think that the inordinancy of thine affections to the world, will be a passable excuse for the coldness of thine affections to the Lord Jesus? Make haste, and get this matter mended, and conclude that thy worldly business then becomes a snare to thee, and thy concern about it, is excessive and inordinate, and an ill symptom, when it prevails to keep thee back from this ordinance.

Perhaps fome unhappy quarrels, with fome relations or with neighbours, fome vexatious law-fuit they are engaged in, or fome hot words that have past, 1

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are pleaded as an excuse for withdrawing from the communion. They are not in charity with others, or others are not in charity with them; and they have been told, and it is undoubtedly true, that it is better to flay away than come in malice; but then the malice is to far from being an excule for the flaying away, that really the flaying away is an aggravation of the malice. The law in this cafe is very express. If thy brother has ought against thee, i. e. If thy confcience tell thee that thou art the party offending, do not therefore leave the altar, but leave thy gut before the altar, as a pawn for thy return, and go first and be reconciled to thy brother, by confesting thy fault, begging his pardon, and making fatisfactions for the wrong done, and then be fure to come and offer thy gift, Matth. v. 24. But, on the other hand, if ye have ought against any, if thou be the party offended, then forgive, Matth. xi. 25. Lay afide all uncharitable thoughts, angry refentments, and defire of revenge, and be in readiness to confirm and evidence your love to those that have injured you; and then, if they will not be reconciled to you, yet your being reconciled to them, is sufficient to remove that bar in your way to this ordinance. In short, strife and con-tention, as far as it is our fault, must be truly repented of, and the fincerity of our repentance evidenced by amendment of life; and then it needs not hinder us: as far as it is our crofs, it must be patiently borne, and we must not be disturbed in our minds by it; and then it needs not hinder us. And that law fuit which cannot be carried on without malice, and hatred of our brother, had better be let fall, whatever we lose. Law is costly indeed, when it is followed at the expence of love and charity.

But, lastly, If the true reason of your absenting yourselves so often from the Lord's supper be, that you are not willing to take that pains with your own.

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hearts, and to lay that restraint upon yourselves both before and after, which you know you must if you come; if indeed you are not willing to have your thoughts fo closely fixed, your consciences so strictly examined, and your engagements against fin fo strong. ly confirmed, as they will be by this ordinance; if this be your case, you have reason to fear that " the "things which remain are ready to die, and your " works are not found filled up before God." It is a fad fign of spiritual decay, and it is time for thee to " remember whence thou art fallen, and to repent, "and do thy first works." Time was, when thou hadft a dear love to this ordinance, when thou long. edft for the returns of it, and it was to thee " more than thy necessary food: fuch was the kindness of thy youth, fuch the love of thine espousals :" but it is otherwise now. Do you now set loose to it? Are you indifferent whether you enjoy the benefit of it or no? Can you live contentedly without it? You have reason to sear lest you are of those that are drawing back to perdition. Having "begun in the Spirit "you now end in the flesh?" What iniquity have you found in this ordinance that you have thus forfaken it? Has it been "as a barren wilderor ness to you, or as waters that fail?" If ever it were fo, was it not your own fault? Return therefore, ye backfliding children, be perfuaded to return; return to God, return to your duty, to this duty; be elofe and constant to it as you were formerly; for I dare fay, then it was better with you than now," Hof. ii. 7.

Those that, by the grace of God, do still keep up a love for this ordinance, should contrive their affairs so, as if possible, not to miss any of their stated opportunities for it. Thomas, by being once absent from a meeting of the disciples, lost that joyful sight of Christ, which the rest then had. It is good to have a mail in God's holy place, Ezra ix. 8. Blessed are they

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let du that dwell in his house; not those that only sojourn there as a way-faring man, that turns aside to tarry but for a night; but these that take it for their home, their rest for ever,

Yet if God, by his providence, prevent our enjoyment of an expected opportunity of this kind, at any time; though we must lament it as an afflictive disappointment, and take that occasion to humble ourselves for our former unprofitableness, yet we may comfort ourselves with this, that though God has tied us to ordinances, he has not tied himself to them, but by his grace can make providences work, instead of them, for the good of our fouls. It is better to be, like David, under a forced absence from God's altar, and have our hearts there, Pfal lxxxiv. 1, 2. than to be. Eke Doeg, present under a force, "detained before the "Lord." I Sam. xxi. 7. and the heart going after covetoufness. It is better to be lamenting and longing in the want of ordinances, than loathing in the fulnels of them.

## C H A P. IV.

Helps for Self Examination before we come to this Ordinance.

HOW earnest soever we are in pressing people to join themselves to the Lord in this ordinance, we would not have them to be "rash with their "mouth, nor hasty to utter any thing before God," Meel. v. 2. It must be done, but it must be done with great caution and consideration. Bounds must be set about the mount on which God will descend, and we must address ourselves to solemn services with a solemn pause. It is not enough that we seek God in a due ordinance, but we must "seek him in a due order," I Cor.

"take hold on him," Ifa. lxiv. 7: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Ifrael," Amos iv. 12. Those that labour under such an habitual indisposition to communion with God, and liable to many actual discomposures, as we are conscious to ourselves of, have need to take pains with their heart, and should, with a very ferious thought and steady resolution, engage them to

approach unto God.

Now, the duty most expressly required in our preparation for the ordinance of the Lord's supper, is
that of self-examination. The apostle, when he would
rectify the abuses which had sullied the beauty of this
facrament in the church of Corinth, prescribes this
great duty as necessary to the due management of it
and a preservative against sharing in the guilt of such
corruptions, I Cor. xi. 28. 'But let a man examine
himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink
of that cup.' He that desires the Lord's Supper (to
allude to that of the apostle, I Tim. iii. I.) desires
a good work; but as it follows there, ver. 10. let these
also sirst be proved, let them prove their ownselves
2 Cor. xiii. 5. and so let them come; so upon that
condition, so with that preparation, as Psal. xxvi. 6.
I will wash my hands in innocency, so will I compass
thine altar.' In this method we must proceed.
"Let a man examine himself"——signifies either

"Let a man examine himself"——fignifies either to prove, or to approve, and appoint such an approbation of ourselves, as it is the result of a strict and close probation; and such a probation of ourselves as issues in a comfortable approbation according to the tenour of the new covenant. It is so to prove ourselves, as to approve ourselves to God in our integrity. Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee: So as to appeal to God's enquiry, Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, Pfal. xxvi. 2.

To examine ourselves, is to discourse with our own hearts; it is to converse with ourselves; a very ra-

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tional, needful, and improving piece of conversation. When we go about this work, we must retire from the world, "fit alone and keep silence;" We must retire into our bosoms and consider ourselves, reslect upon ourselves, inquire concerning ourselves, enter into a solemn conserence with our own souls, and be inquisitive concerning our state. Those who are ignorant, and cannot do this, or careless and secure, and will not do it, are unmeet for this ordinance.

Shall I illustrate this by some similitudes?

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(r.) We must examine ourselves, as metal is examined by the touchstone, whether it be right or counterfeit. We have a flew of religion; but are what we feem to be? Are we current coin, or only washed over, as 'a potsherd covered with filver dross?'
Prov. xxvi. 23. Hypocrites are reprobate filver, Jer. True Christians, when they are tried, come forth as gold, Job xxiii. 10. The word of God is the touchstone by which we must try ourselves. Can I through grace answer the characters which the scriptures give of those whom Christ will own and save? It is true the best coin has an alloy which will be allowed for, in this state of imperfection; but the queltion is, Is it sterling, is it standard? Though I am conscious to myself, there are remainders of a baser metal; yet is love to God the predominant principle? Are the interests of Christ the prevailing interest in my foul above those of the world and the flesh? I bear God's image and superscription: Is it of God's own stamping? Is it upon an honest and good heart it Is it a matter of great consequence, and in which is is very common, but very dangerous to be imposed upon; and and therefore we have need to be jealous over ourselves? When we are bid to try the spirits, I John iv. 1. it is supposed we must begin with our own, and try them first. (2.) We

(2.) We must examine ourselves, 'as a malefactor ' is examined by the magistrate,' that we may find out what we have done amifs. We are all criminals: that is readily acknowledged by each of us, because it is owned to be the common character, 'All have finned, and come flort of the glory of God.? We are all prisoners to the divine justice, from the arrests of which we cannot escape, and to the processes of which we ly obnoxious: being thus in custody, that we may not be judged by the Lord, we are commanded to judge ourselves, I Cor. xi. 31. We must inquire into the particular crimes we have been guilty of, and their circumstances, that we may discover more fins, and more of the evil of them, than at first we are aware of, dig into the wall as Ezekial did, chap. viii. 8. and fee the fecret abominations of your own hearts; look further, as he did, ver. 13, 15. and you will fee more and greater. The heart is deceitful, and has many devices, many evalions, to shift convictions; we have therefore need to be very particular and firid in examining them, and to give them that charge which Joshua gave to Achan, when he had him under examination, Josh. vii. 19. Give glory unto the Gol of Ifrael, and make a confession unto him; tell me now what thou halt done, hide it not from me.'

(3.) We must examine ourselves, as a copy is examined by the original, to find out the errata, that they may be corrected. As Christians, we prosess to be the epistles of Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 3. to have his law and love transcribed into our hearts and lives; but we are concerned to inquire, whether it be a true copy, by comparing ourselves with the gospel of Christ, whether our affections and conversations be conformable to it, and such as becomes it. How far do I agree with it, and where are the disagreements? What mistakes are there? What blots and what omissions? That what hath been amiss may be pardoned, and

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what is amils may be rectified. In this examination, faith must read the original, and then let conscience read the copy, and be sure that it read true, because

there will be shortly a review.

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(4.) We must examine ourselves as a candidate is examined that stands for preferment. Enquiry is made into his sitness for the preferment he stands for: we are candidates for heaven, the highest preferment to be to our God, kings and priests. We stand for a place at the wedding seast; Have we on the wedding garment? Are we made meet for the inheritance? What knowledge have we? What grace? Are we skilled in the mystery we make profession of? What improvement have we made in the school of Christ? What proficiency in divine learning? What testimonials have we to produce? Can we shew the seal of the Spirit of promise? Have we a ticket? If not, we shall not be welcome.

(5.) We must examine ourselves, as a wife is examined of her confent to the levying of a fine for the confirming of a covenant. It is a common ulage of the law. A covenant is to be ratified between God and our fouls in the Lord's Supper: Do we freely and chearfully confent to that covenant, not merely through the constraint of natural conscience, but because it is a covenant highly reasonable in itself, and unspeakably advantageous to us. Am I willing to make this furrender of myself unto the Lord? Am I freely willing, not because I cannot help it, but because I cannot better dispose of mysels? We must examine ourselves as Joshua examined the people, whether they could chuse to serve the Lord or no, Josh. xxiv. 15. &c. and the product of the inquiry must be a fixed resolution, like theirs, ver. 12. 'Nay, but we will ferve the Lord-'

(6.) We must examine ourselves, as a way-saring man is examined concerning his business. Our trisling hearts have need to be examined as vagrants, whence they come, whether they go, and what they would

have to we are coming to a great ordinance, and are reoncerned to inquire what is our end in coming! What brings us thither? Is it only custom or company that draws us to this duty? or is it a spiritual appetite to the dainties of heaven? Our hearts must be carechifed, as Elijah was, I Kings vix. 9. ' What doll thou here, Elijah? That we may give a good account to God of the fincerity of our intentions in our ap. proaches to him, we ought, before we come, to call ourselves to an account concerning them.

More particularly to examine ourselves, is to put se rious questions to ourselves, and to our own hearts; tand to profecute them till a full and true answer be given to them. These six questions (among others) are good for each of us to put to ourselves in our preparation to the Lord's Supper, both at our admission, and in out after approaches to it, 'What am I? What have FI done? What am I doing? What ground do I get! What do I want? and what shall I resolve to do?

First, Inquire, "What am I?" It needs no inquibut it calls for ferious confideration, that I am a a reasonable creature, lower than the angels, higher athan the brutes, capable of knowing, ferving, and glo rifying God in this world, and of feeing and enjoying him in a better. I am made for my Creator, and am accountable to him. This I am, God grant I have anot fuch a noble and excellent being in vain! But here this question has another meaning; all the children of men, by the fall of the first Adam, are become finners; fome of the children of men, by the grace of the fecond Adam, are become faints: fome remain in a flate of nature, others are brought into a flate of grace; fome are fanctified, others unfanctified. is a diffinction which divides all mankind, and which will last when all other divisions and subdivisions shall be no more; for according to this will the everlafting fare be determined. Now, when I ask, What am I?

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The meaning is, Which of these two do I belong to? Am I in the savour of God, or under his wrath and curse? Am I a servant of God, or a slave to the world and the siesh? Look forwards and ask, "Whether I am going?" To heaven or hell? If I should die this night (and I am not sure to live till to morrow) whether would death bring me? Where would death lodge me? in endless light, or in utter darkness? Am I in the narrow way that leads to life, or in the broad way that leads to destruction? I am called a Christian but am I a Christian indeed? Have I a nature answerable to the name?

It highly concerns us all to be first and impartial in this inquiry? What will it avail us to deceive ourfelves? God cannot be imposed upon, though men It is undoubtedly true, if we be not faints on earth, we shall never be faints in heaven. It is not a small thing which I am now persuading thee to inquire about; no, it is thy life, thy precious life, the life of thy foul thine eternal life which depends upon it. Multitudes have been deceived in this matter, whose ways seemed right, but the end of it proved the ways of death; and after they had long flattered themselves in their own eyes, they perished at last, with a lie in their right hand. We also are in danger of being deceived, and therefore have need to be jealous over ourfelves with a godly jealoufy: and being told that many who eat and drink in Christ's presence, will be difowned and rejected by him in the great day, we have each of us more reason to suspect ourselves than the disciples had, and to ask, Lord, is it 1?

But it especially concerns us to insist upon this inquiry when we draw near to God in the Lord's Supper. It is children's bread that is there prepared: Am I a child? If not I have no part nor lot in the matter. I am there to seal a covenant with God; but, If never made the covenant, never in succeive confected

62, Self-Examination before the Lord's Supper.

fented to it, I shall put the seal to a blank, nay, to a curfe a

Therefore, that I may consider in some measure what my spiritual state is, let me seriously inquire,

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(1.) "What choice have I made?" Have I chosen God's favour for my felicity and fatisfaction, or the pleasures of ferfe, and the wealth of this world? Since I came to be capable of acling for myfelf, and difcerning between my right hand and my left, have I made religion my deliberate choice? Have I chosen God for my portion, Christ for my master, the scripture for my rule, holiness for my way, and heaven for my home and everlaiting reft ? If not, how can I expect to have what I never chose? If my covenant with the world and the fieth (which certainly amounts to a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell) be fill in force, and never yet broken, never yet difamulled, What have I to do to take God's covenant, and the feal of lit into my mouth? But if I have refused Satan's offers of the kingdom of this world, and the glory of them, and give the preference to the golpehoffer of a kingdom in the other world, and the glory of that, I have reason to bles the Lord who gave me that counfel. Pful xvi. 4, 5, 6, 7, and to hope that he, who hath directed me to choose the way of truth, will enable me to "flick to his testimonics," Plal. exix. 30, 31.

Lak, Am I a child of wrath, or a child of love? I must remember that I was by nature a child of wrath. Now, can I witness to a change? Though I cannot chally tell the time and manner, and the steps of that change, yet one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see! John ix. 25. Though, in many religible in it still bad with me, yet thanks be to God, it is bester with me than it has been. Time was when I minded nothing but sport and pleasure, or nothing but the Business of this world, when I never seriously a bayoled radious.

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shought of God and Christ, and my foul and another world: but now it is otherwise: now I fee a reality in invisible things. I find an alteration in my care and. concern; and now I ask more folicitously, What ' shall I do to be faved?' than ever l'asked. ' What fhall I cat, or what shall I drink, or wherewithit ' shall I be cloathed?' Time was, when this vain and carnel heart of mine had no relish at all of boly ordinances, took no delight in them, called them a task and a weariness: But now it is otherwise: I love to be alone with God; and though I bring little to pala, yet I love to be doing in his fervice. If I have indeed experienced such a change as this; if this bleffed turn be given to the bent of my foul, grace, free grace, must have the glory of it, and I may take the comfort of it. But if I have not found any fuch work wrought in my heart, if I am still what I was by nature, vain and carnal, and careless; if Jordan run full in the old channel, and was never yet driven back before the ark of the covenant. I have reason to suspect the worst by myself. If all go one way without ffruggle or opposition, it is to be feared it is not the right way.

(3.) "What is the bent of my affections?" The affections are the pulse of the foul: If we would know its state, we must observe how that pulse beats. How do I fland affected to fin? Do I dread it as most dangerous, loath it as most odious, and complain of it as most grievous? Or do I make a light matter of it, "as the mad man that casteth fire brands, arrows, " and death, and faith, Am not I in sport?" Which lies heavier, the burden of fin, or the burden of affliction; and which am I most desirous to be eased of? What think I of Christ! How do I stand affected to him? Do I love him, and prize him as the fairest of ten thousand in himself, and the fittest of twenty thoufand for me? or, bath he in mine eyes no form nor combiness? and is he no more than another beloved?

How do I fland affected to the word and ordinances! -i Are God's tabernacles amiable with me, or are they difficable? Am I in God's fervice as in my element, one that ealls it a delight? or am I in it as under redakmement, and as one that calls it a drudgery? How des fraid affected to good people? Do I love the Image of Christ where ever I fee it, though it be in s, or though not in my own colour? Do I honour them that fear the Lord, and choose his people for my people in all conditions? or do I prefer the gaieties of ele world before the beauties of holiness? How do I hand affected to this world? Is it under my feet, where thousa be, or in my heart, where Christ Books be? Do I value it, and love it, and feek it with prevailing cancern? or do I look upon it with a boly contempt and indifferency? Which have the greater command over me? and which, in my account, have the most powerful and attractive charms; those riches, honours and pleafures, that are worldly, or these that are spiritual and divine?-How del stand affected to the other world? Do I dread eter hal milery in a world of fpirits more than the greatest temperal calamities here in this world of fense? De I define eternal happiness in a future state, more than the highest contentments and satisfactions this present Hate can pretend to? Or, are the things of the other world, though fure and near, looked upon as doubtful and diffant, and confequently little? By a closs pro-Techtion of fuch inquiries as these, with a charge to confeience, in God's name, to make a true answer to them we may come to know our ownfelves.

fations of The tree is known by its fruits. Do I work the works of the flesh, or bring forth the fruits of the Spirits. The apossle gives us instances of both, Gal. works are the most deceived yourselves, neither let any man deceive you: "He that doth righteousness is

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" righteous," I John iii. 7. And the furest mark of uprightness, is "keeping ourselves from our own ini-" quity," 2 Sam. xxii. 24. Do'l allow myfelf in any known fin under the cloak of a visible profession? Dare I, upon any provocation, fwear or curfe, or profane God's holy name, and therein speak the language of . his enemies? Dare I, upon any allurment to pleafe my appetite, or please my company, drink to excess, and facrifice my reason, honour and conscience to that base and brutish lust? Dare I defile a living temple of the Holy Ghoff by adultery, fornication, uncleannels, or an act of laciviousness? Dare I tell a fie for my gain or reputation? Dare I go beyond, on defraud my brother in any matter, cheat those I deal with, or oppress those I have advantage against Dare I deny relief to the poor that really need it, when it is in the power of my hand to give it? Dane I bear malice to any, and fludy revenge? If fo, I must know that these are not the spots of God's children, Deut. atxii, g. If this be the life I live, I am certainly a franger to the life of God. But it, upon fearch, my own heart tells me, that I keep my felf pure from their pollutions, and "herein exercise myself, to have al-"ways a confeience void of offence, both towards God " and towards man;" It I have respect to all God's commandments, and make it my daily care in every thing to frame my life according to them, and to keep in the fear of God every day, and all the day long, and wherein I find I am detective, and come thort of my duty, I repent of it, and am more watchful and diligent for the future, I have reason to hope, that though I have not attained, neither am already perfect, yet there is a good work begun in me, which hall be performed unto the day of Christ, and to ship went

Thus we must examine our spiritual state; and, that the trial may come to an issue, we must earnessly pray to God to discover us unto ourselves, and must be

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is bad, and that we are yet unfanctified and unregenerate, we mail give all diligence to get the matter mended. If our flate be not good, yet thanks be to God it may be made good. "There is hope in Ifrael concerning this thing." Rest not therefore in thy former faint purposes, and seable efforts, but consider more for the fanctifying grace of God; put sorth thyself more vigorously than ever to improve that grace; resolve more firmly than ever upon the merit and strength of Jesus Christ, and I hope thou wilt soon experience a blessed change.

(2) Hwe find cause to hope that our spiritual state is good, we must take the comfort of it, and give God the praise, and not hearken to the tempter when he would distant our peace, and hinder our progress, by eating it in question. Though we must always abase ourselves, and be jealous over ourselves, yet we must not decogate from the honour of God's grace, nor decoy its work in us. God keeps us all, both from deceiving ourselves with groundless hopes, and from dis-

quieting ourselves with groundless fears.

Recordly, Inquire, what have I done? We come to the ordinance of the Bord's Supper to receive the remission of our fins, according to the tenor of the new covenant. Now, one thing required of us, in order to peace and pandon is, That we confess our fins. If we do that, "God is faithful and just to forgive "them," I John i. 9. But if we cover them, we can not prosper, Prov. xxviii. 13. Not that we can, by our confession, inform God of any thing he did not know before, as earthly princes are informed by the confessions of criminals; but this we must give glory

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to God, and take frame to ourfelves, and freenthin our own guard against fin for the future. In the confeffion of fin it is requifire that we be particular; the high priest on the day of atonement, must confeis over the fcape-goat, "all the iniquities of the children of "Hrad, and all their transgressions in all their fins." Lev. xvi. 21. It is not enough to fav. as Saul . I "have finned," r Sam. xv. 30. but we must fay as David, " I have finned and done this evil," Pfal. H. L. As Achan, "I have finned, and thus and thus have I "done," Jolh. vii. 20. A broken heart will berely be more broken, and better prepared to be bound up; a burdened confeience will hereby be cafed, as Davist's was, when he faid, "I will confes," Pfall axxis at 5. Commonly the more particular and free we are in confessing our fins to God, the more comfort we have in the fense of the pardon : deceit lies in generals,

It is therefore necessary, in order to a particular confession of fin, that we "fearch and try our ways,"? Lam. iii. 40. that we examine our confciences. look over their records, reflect upon the actions of our life paft, and feriously call to mind wherein we have offended God in any thing. The purting of this queftion is spoken of as the first step towards repentance. fer. viii 6. "No man repenteth him of his wicked-" nefs, faying, What have I done?" For want of this inquiry duly made, when men are called to return. they baffle the call with that careless question, Mal iii. 7. "Wherein shall we return?" Let us therefore fet ourselves to look back, and remember our faults this day: it is better to be minded of them now. when the remembrance of them will open us a door of hope, than be minded of them in hell, where, fin remembered, will aggravate an endless despair of

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We ought to be often calling ourselves to an account: in the close of every day, of every week, the day's work, the week's work should be reviewed. It

is one of the richest of Pythagoras's golden verses, that wherein, though a heathen, he adviseth his pupil every night before he fleeps, to go over the actions of the day, and revolve them three times in his mind. asking himself seriously these questions :-- "Where " in have I transgressed? What have I done? What "duty hath been omitted?" The oftner it is done, the easier it is done: even reckonings make long friends. But it is especially necessary that it be done before a facrament: former reflections made, ought then to be repeated; and with a particular exactness we must consider what our ways have been since we were last renewing our covenants with God at his table, that we may be humbled for the follies we have returned to fince God fpoke peace to us, and may be more particular and fleady in our refolutions for the future.

To give some affishance in this inquiry, I shall inflance in some heads of it. Let the interrogatories

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(1.) " How have I employed my thoughts? Hath God been in all my thoughts? It is well if he has been in any. When I awake, am I still with him! Or, am I not still with the world and the flesh? When I should have been contemplating the glory of God, the love of Christ, and the great things of the other world, hath not my heart been with the fool's eyes in the ends of the earth, "following after lying vanities, " and forfaking mine own mercies?" How feldom have I thought feriously, and with any fixedness of fpiritual and divine things ? I fet myfalf fometimes to meditate, but I foon break off abruptly, and this treacherous heart flarts aside like a broken bow, and nothing that is good is brought to any head; but how have vain and vile thoughts lodged within me, gone out and come in with me, lain down and rifen up with me, and crouded out good thoughts? Hath not the imaginations

only evil, and that continually? Gen. viii. 21,

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they been kept under the dominion of religion and right reason, or have they not grown intemperate and head-strong, and transgressed due bounds? Have not provocations been to much resented, and made too deep an impression? Hath not my heart many times been hot within me, too hot, so that its heat hath consumed the peace of my own mind, and the love I owe my brother? Hath not anger rested in my bosom? Have not malice and uncharitableness, sceret enmittees and antipathies, been harboured there, where love and peace should have reigned and given law in

possessed my vessel in functification and honour, or an Imor conscious to myself of including the lust of uncleanness? If, by the grace of God, I have kept my body pure, yet hath not my spirit been desiled by impure thoughts and affections? I have made a covenant with mine eye not to look and lust, but have I made good that covenant? Have I in no instance transgressed the laws of chastity in my heart and modesty in my behaviour? Let this inquiry be made with a strict guard upon the soul, lest that which should not be named among Christians, be thought of without that just abhorrence and detestation which becometh saints.

(4.) "How have I used my tongue?" It was defigned to be my glory, but has it not been my shame? Hath not much corrupt communication proceeded out of my mouth, and little of that which is good, which might either manifest grace, or minister grace? Have not I sometimes spoke unadvisedly, and faid that in lashe which at leisure I could have wished unsaid: Have not I said that, by which God's great name bath been dishonoured, or my brother's good name represented, or my own exposed? If, for every idle word that I speak, I must give account to God, I had best call

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(5.) "How have I spent my time?" So long I have lived in the world, to what purpose have I lived? what improvement have I made of my days for doing or getting good? It is certain I have lost time; have I yet begun to redeem it, and to repair those losses! How many hours have I spent that might have been spent much better? There is a duty which every day requires, but how little of it has been done in its day?

(6.) "How have I managed my worldly calling?" Have I therein abode with God, or have I not in many inflances of it wandered from him? Have I been just and fair in all my dealings, and spoken the truth from my heart? Or have I not sometimes dealt deceitfully in bargaining, and said that which bordered upon a lie? Hath not fleshly wisdom governed me more than that simplicity and godly sincerity which becomes a lifraclite indeed? Have I no wealth got by vanity; no unjust gain, no blot of that kind cleaving to my hand?

(7.) "How have I received my daily food?" Havel never transgressed the law of temperance in meat and drink, and so made my table my snare? Have not God's good gifts been abused to luxury and seminality, and the body, which, by the sober use of them, should have been fitted, by the excessive use of them, distitute to serve the soul in the service of God? Have I not eaten to myself, and drunk to myself, Zech. vii. 6. when I should have eaten and drunk to the glory of God?

(8.) "How have I done the duty of my particular relations?" The word of God hath expressly taught me my duty as a husband, a wife, a parent, a child, a master, a servant; but have I not in many things failed of my duty? Have not I carled myself disrespectfully to my superiors, distainfully to my inferiors, and disingenuously to my equals? Have I

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Have

iven to each that which is just and right, and renlered to all their dues? Have I been a comfort to

my relations, or have I not caused grief.

(9.) " How have I performed my fecret worthip?" Have I been constant to it, morning and evening; or have I not fometimes omitted it, and put it by with ome frivolous excuse? Have I been conscientious in t, and done it with an eye to God: or have I not tept it up merely as a custom, and suffered it to degenerate into a formality? Have I been lively and erious in fecret prayer and reading, or have I not essed in the outside of the performance, without any lose application and intention of mind in it?

(10.) "How have I laid out what God has given me in the world?" I am but a steward; have I been uthful? Have I honoured the Lord with my fubsnee, and done good with it; or have I waited and mapplied my Lord's goods? Hath God had his ues, my family and the poor their dues out of my flate? What should have been confecrated to picty ad charity, bath it not been either finfully spared, or

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ofully spent ? somerequest to kel soft L (11.) " How have I improved the Lord's day, and other the helps I have had for my foul?" I enjoy reat plenty of the means of grace; have I grown in race in the use of those means, or have I not reeved the grace of God therein in vain? Have I called the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable:" or have I not fnuffed at it, and id, "When will the Sabbath be gone?" How have profited by fermons and facraments, and other the dyantages of folemn assemblies? Have I received and ctained the good impressions of hely ordinances, or ave I not lost them, and let them flip!

(12.) "How have I born my afflictions?" What rovidence had croffed me, and frowned upon me, hat frame have I been in, repining or repenting?

Have I submitted to the will of God in my afflictions. and patiently accepted the punishment of my iniquity? or have not I driven with my Maker, and quarrelled with his disposals? When mine own foolishness hath perverted my way, buth not my heart fretted against the Lord? What good have I gotten to my foul by my afflictions? What inward gain by outward loffes! Hath my heart been more humbled and weaned from the world or have I not been hardened under the rod, and trespassed yet more against the Lord?

Many more fuch queries might be inflanced, but thele may fuffice for a specimen. Yet it will not fuffice to put these questions to ourselves, but we must diligently observe what return conscience, upon an impartial learch, makes to them. We must not do a Phate did when he asked our Saviour, What is truth! but would not flay for an answer, John xviii. 28 No, we must take pains to find out what hath been amile, and herein must accomplish a diligent fearch.

And, (2.) As far as we find ourfelves not guilty we must own our obligations to the grace of God, and return thanks for that grace, and let the testimony of conscience for us be our rejoicing. " If our to hearts condemn us not, then we have confidence to wards God "

(11) As far as we find ourfelves guilty, we must be humbled before God for it, mourn and be in bitter ness at the remembrance of it, cry earnestly to God for the pardon of it, and be particular in our refole sions, by God's grace, to fin no more. Pray as Joh is taught, "That which I fee not teach thou me," and promife follows there, "Wherein I have done "iniquity, I will do fo no more."

Thirdly, Inquire, What am I doing? When we have confidered what our way hath been, it is time to confider what it is. " Ponder the path of the

" feet," Prov. iv. 26.

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conversation? Am I doing in the general course of my conversation? Am I doing any thing for God, for my soul, for eternity, any thing for the service of my generation: or, am I not standing all the day idle? It is the law of God's house, as well as of ours: he that will not labour, let him not eat," 2 Thes. iii. 10. If I find that, according as my capacity and opportunity is through the grace of Christ, I am going on in the way of God's commandments, this ordinance will be comforting and quickening to me; but if I gave way to spiritual stoth and slumber, and do not mind my business, set this shame me out of it, and humble me for it: How unworthy am I to eat my master's bread, while I take no care to do my master's work?

(2.) What am I doing in this approach to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper! I know what is to be done, but am I doing it? Do I apply myself to it in fincerity, and with a fingle eye, in a right manner, and for right ends? Am I by repentance undoing that which I have done amis? And am I, by renewing my covenant with God, doing that better which I have formerly done well? Am I joining myfelf unto the Lord, with purpose of heart to cleave unto him to the end? It is the preparation for the passover: Am I doing the work of that day in its day? Am I purging out the old leaven, buying fuch things as I have need of against the feast, without money and without price? Am I engaging my heart to approach unto God? or, am I thinking of fomething elfe? Am I flothful in this business? or, do I make a business of it?

Here it is good to examine, whether, beside the common and general intentions of this ordinance, there be not something particular, which I should more especially have in my eye in my preparation for it? Do I find my heart at this time more than usually broken for sin, and humbled at the remembrance of it? Let me then set in vigorously with

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those impressions, and drive that nail: or, is my heart in a special manner affected with the love of Christ, and enlarged in holy wonder, joy and praise? Let its out-goings that way be quickened, and those thoughts imprinted deep and improved; so of the like.

Fourthly, Inquire, "What ground do I get?" If, upon examination, there appear some evidences of the truth of grace, I must then examine my growth in grace; for grace, if it be true, will be growing; that well of water will be springing up; and he that hath clean hands will be stronger and stronger." There is a spiritual death, or at least some prevailing spiritual disease, where there is not some improvement and progress towards perfection.

By what measures then may I try my growth in

grace ?

(i.) "Do I find my practical judgment more fetven." If fo, it is a fign I am getting forward. We cannot judge of ourfelves by the pangs of affection; those may be more sensible and wehement at first, and there being less fo afterwards, ought not to discourage us: The fire may not blaze to high as it did and yet may burn better and stronger. But do I see firongly convinced of its certainty and excellency, fo as to be able better than at first to " give a reason of the hope that is in me?" my first love was able to call religion a comfortable service: Was my after light better able to call it a reasonable service! I was extremely furprized when at first "I faw men as trees Walking:" But, am I now better fatisfied, when I begin to fee all things more clearly? Mark viii. 24. 25. Am I through God's grace better rooted ? or, am I through my own folly still as " a reed shaken with the willd ?" (2.) "Do

(2.) " Do I find my corrupt appetites and passions " more manageable? or, are they flill as voilent and "headftrong as ever?" Doth the house of Saul grow weaker and weaker, and its fruggles for the dominion less frequent and more feeble? If so, it is a good fign the house of David grows stronger and stronger. Though these Canaanites are in the land, yet do they not make head as they have done, but are under tribute? then the interests of Ifrael are getting ground. Do I find that my defires towards those things that are pleasing to sense are not so eager as they have been, but the body is kept under more, and brought into subjection to grace and wisdom, and it is not fo hard a thing to me, as it had been fometimes to deny myself? Do I find that my resentments of those things which are displeasing to the flesh, are not so deep and keen as they have been? Can I bear afflictions from a righteous God, and provocations from unrighteous men, with more patience and better composure and command of myself than I could have done? Am I not so peevish and fretful, and unable to bear an affront or disappointment, as fometimes I have been? If so surely he that hath "begun the good work is carrying it on: But, if nothing be done towards the suppressing of these rebels, towards the weeding out of these " roots of bitterness which spring up and trouble us," though we lament them, yet we do not prevail against them; it is to be feared we stand as a stay, or go back.

(3.) "Do I find the duties of religion more easy "and pleasant to me?" Or, am I still as unskilled and unready in them as ever? Do I go dexterously about a duty, as one that understands it, and is used to it, and as a man that is master of his trade, goes on with the business of it: or, do I go aukwardly about it, as one not versed in it? When God calls, Scek ye my face, Do I, like the child Samuel, run to Eli, and terminate my regards in the out-side of the service? Or, do I.

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like the man David, chearfully answer, " Thy face, "Lord will I feek; and fo enter into that within the " vail?" Though, on the one hand, there is not a greater support to hypocrify, than a formal customary road of external performances; yet, on the other hand, there is not a furer evidence of fincerity and growth, than an even, conflant, steady course of lively devotion, which by daily use, becomes familiar and cally and by the new nature, natural to us. A growing Christian takes this word before him, and fings at it.

(4.) "Do I find my heart more weaned from this present life, and more willing to exchange it for a better?" or, am I still Joath to leave it? Are or, am I fill loath to leave it? Are thoughts of death more pleasing to meithan they have been, or are they fill as terrible as ever? If, through grace, we are got above the fear of death, by reason of which many weak and trembling Christians are all their life time subject to boudage, and can truly say, We define to depart and to be with Christ, which is "far, better," it is certain we are getting ground, though we have not yet attained it.

(5.) If apop fearch, we find that we make no progress in grace and holiness, let the ordinance of the Lord's Supperate improved for the furtherance of our growth, and the removal of that, whatever it is which hinders it; if we find we thrive, though but flowly; and though it is not fo well, with us as it should be, yet, through grace, it is better with us, than it bath been, and that we are not always babes, let us be encouraged to abound fo much the more. "Go on and profper, the Lord is with thee, while

"then ert with him, in half or mood or am agride a

Fifthly, Inquire, "What do I want?" A true fenfe of our spiritual negessities is required to qualify us for fpiritual supplies. The hungry only are filled with good hings. It concerns us therefore, when we come to an ordinance, which is as a spiritual market, to con-Holder

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fider what we have occasion for, that we may know what to lay hold on, and may have an answer ready to that question which will be put to us at the banquet of wine, "What is thy petition, and what is thy request?" or that which Christ put to the blind man, Matth. xx. 32. "What will ye that I shall do unto you?"

"Grace and peace from God the Father, and from "our Lord Jesus Christ," are inclusive of all the blessings we can desire, and have in them enough to supply all our needs: Since therefore we must ast and receive, that our joy may be full, it concerns us to inquire, what particular grace and comfort we need, that we may, by faith and desire, reach forth towards.

that in a special manner.

(1.) " What grace do I most want?" Wherein do I find myfelf most desective, weakest and most exposed? what corruption do I find working most in me? the grace that is opposite to that, I must need. Am I apt to be proud or paffionate? Humility and meckness then are the graces I most want. Am I apt to be timerous and distrustful? Faith and hope then are the graces I most want. What temptations am I most frequently affaulted with? Which way doth Satan get most advantage against me, by my constitution, calling or company? There I must want help from heaven, and strength to double my guard. Am I in danger of being drawn by my outward circumstances to intemperance or deceit, or oppression or dissimulation? Then fobriety, justice, and fincerity are the graces I most want. What is the nature of the duties I am mostly ealled out to, and employed in? Are they such as oblige me to stoop to that which is mean? Then felf-denial is the grace I most want: Are they such as oblige me to struggle with that which is difficult and discouraging? Then courage and wisdom are the graces I most want. Whatever our wants are, there are promifes in the new covenant adapted to them,

which, in this ordinance, we must in a particular manner apply to ourselves, and claim the benefit of, and receive as scaled to us. If we cannot bethink ourselves of particular promises suited to our case, yet there is enough in the general ones; "I will put my Spirit "within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," Ezek. xxxvi. 27. "I will put my law in your hearts," Heb. viii. 10. "and my sear," Jer. xxii. 40. and many the like. And we know who hath said, "My grace is

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" fufficient for thee," 2 Cor xii. o.

(2.) "What comfort do I most want?" What is the burden that lies most heavy? I must feek for fupport under that burden. What is the grief that is most grieving? I must seek for a balance to that grief. The guilt of fin is oft disquieting to me: O for the comfort of a fealed pardon! The power of corruption is very discouraging: O for the comfort of victorious grace! I am oft toffed with doubts and fears about my spiritual state, as if the Lord had "utterly sepe-"" rated me from his people, and I were a dry tree," Ifa. Ivi. 3. O for the comfort of clear and unclouded evidences! I am fometimes tempted to fay, "The "Lord hath forfaken me, my God harh forgotten me." Ila. xlix. 14. O that he would feal to my foul that precious promife, "I will never leave thee nor forfake thee! Heb. xiii. 5. But my greatest trouble arises from the fenfe of my own weakness, and bent to backflide; and I am fometimes ready to make that defperate conclusion, " I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul," I Sam. xxvii. 1. O that I may have the comfort of that promise, "I will put my fear in their "hearts that they will not depart from me," Jerxxxii. 48. There is in the coverage to grace, a falve for every fore, a remedy for every melody, comforts fuited to every diffres and forrow; but that we may have the benefit of them, it is requifite that we "know "every one his own fore, and his own grief," as it is expressed,

expressed, 2 Chron. iv. 29. that we may spread it before the Lord, and may apply to ourselves that relief which is proper for it, and "from the sulness which is "in Jesus Christ, may receive, and grace for grace,"

grace for all occasions, John i. 16.

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Here it may be of use to take cognizance even of our outward condition, and inquire into the cares and burdens, the croffes and necessities of that; for even against those there is comfort provided in the new covenant, and administred in this ordinance: "Godlinels hath the promise of the life that now is." When Christ was inviting his disciples to come and dine with him, he asked them first, "children, have ye any "meat?" John xxi. 5. 12. Christ's inquiry into our affairs directs us to make known before him, in particular, the trouble of thom. Let every care be cast upon the Lord in this ordinance, lodged in his hands. and left with him: and let our own spirits be eased of it, by the application of that general word of comfort to this particular case whatever it is, "He careth for "you," I Pet v. 7. What is the concern I am most thoughtful about, relating to myself, my family, or friends? Let that way be committed to the Lord, and to his wife and gracious conduct and disposal: and then let my thoughts concerning it be established. What is the complaint I make most feelingly? is it of a fickly body, difagreeable relations, a declining effate. the removal of those by death that were very dear? Whatever it is, foread it before the Lord, as Hezekiah did Rabshakeh's letter, 2 Kings xix. 4. and allow no complaint that is not fit to be spread before him. When God came to renew his covenant with Abraham, and to tell him that he was his fhield, and his exceeding great reward, Abraham presently puts in a remonstrance of his grievance: " Behold, to me thou " haft given no feed," Gen. xv. 1, 2, 3. Hannah did to when the came up to worthip, I Sam. i. II. And we alfo

also must bring with us such a particular sense of our afflictions, as will enable us to receive and apply the comforts here offered to us, and no more. Holy David observed how his house was with God, and that it was not made to grow, when he was taking the comfort of this, that however it were, "God hath made with " him an everlasting covenant,' 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

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Sixtbly, Inquire, "What shall I resolve to do! This question is equivalent to that of Paul, Acts ix. 6. "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" We come to this ordinance folemnly to engage ourfelves against all fin, and to all duty; and therefore it is good to confider what that fin is which we fould particularly eovenant against, and what that duty which we should most expressly oblige ourselves to. Though the general covenant suffice to bind conscience, yet a particular article will be of use to mind conscience, and to make the general engagment the more effectual. It is good to be particular in our pious refolutions, as well as in our penitent reflections.

For our affistance herein, let us inquire;

(1.) " Wherein we have most mist it hitherto?" Where we have found ourselves most assualted by the fabrilty of the tempter, and most expeled by our own weakness, there we should firengthen our defence, and double our guard. What is the fin that bath most eafily befet me? Heb, xii. Is the well circumstanced fin: that is it which I must more particularly resolve against in the strength of the grace of God. What is the duty I have most neglected, have been most back ward to, and most careless in? To that I must most folemnly bind my foul with this bond.

(2.) "Wherein we may have the best opportunity her of glorifying God!" What can I do in my place for o the " of glorifying God!" What can I do in my place for the service of God's honour, and the interests of his kingdom among men? "The liberal deviseth liberal "things," and fo the pious devifeth pious things, that w ur

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may both engage and excite himself to those liberal pious things, in and by this ordinance. What is the talent I am intrusted with the improvement of? My Lord's goods I am made a fleward of. What is it that is expected from one in my capacity? What fruit is looked for from me? That is it that I must especially have an eye to in my covenants with God; to that I must bind my foul; for that I must fetch in help from heaven, that, having fworn I may perform it. the body man a which the even ment when the tracket

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Instructions for renewing our Covenants with God in our Breparations for this Ordinance. ral a violent allaces solice de considerate de residence

consider writing that server will be a selected

This the wonderful condescension of the God of heaven, that he hath been pleased to deal with man the way of a covenant, that, on the other hand, we night receive strong confolations from the promises of the covenant, which are very sweet and precious? nd, on the other hand, might lie under firong obligaions from the conditions of the covenant, which, on his account, have greater cogency in them than more recept, that we ourselves have occasioned to them, nd that we have therein consulted our own interest bd advantage. How of the last a contract of the

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper, being a feal the covenant, and the folemn exchanging of the rafications of it, it is necessary we make the covenant not there we pretend to feal it. In this order, therefore, e must proceed, first give the hand to the Lord, and en enter into the fanduary; first in secret consent the covenant, and then folemnly teffly that conhis ent: this is like a contract before marriage. They eral hat " ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherthat ward, must join themselves to the Lord in a perpe"tual covenant," Jer. 1. 5. The covenant is mutual and in vain do we expect the bleffings of the covenant, if we be not truly willing to come under the bonds of the covenant. We must enter into covenant with the Lord our God, and into his oath; else he doth not chablish us this day for a people unto himself, Deut xxix. 12, 13. We are not owned and accepted a God's people, though we "come before him as his "people come, and sit before him as his people sit, if we do not in sincerity avouch the Lord for our God, Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. in our baptism this was done for us, in the Lord's Supper we must do it for ourselves, else we do nothing.

Let us confider then, in what method, and after what manner, we must manage this great transaction

For the first, In what method we must renew on covenant with God in Christ, and by what steps we

must proceed.

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First, We must repent of our fins, by which we have rendered ourselves unworthy to be taken into cover nant with God. Those that would be exalted to the honour, must first humble themselves. " God layed " his beam in the waters," Pfall civ. 3. The founds tions of spiritual joy are laid in the waters of penitor tial tears, therefore this fealing ordinance fets the before us, which is proper to move our godly forrow in it we look on him whom we have pierced, and if w do not mourn, and be not in bitterness for him, furd " our hearts are as hard as a stone, yea, harder tha " a piece of the nether militone," Zech. xii. 10. Thol that join themselves to the Lord, must go weeping to do it; fo they did, Jer. -1. 4, 5. That comfort likely to last, which takes rife from deep humiliation and contrition of foul for fin. Those only that forth weeping, bearing this precious feed; shall com again rejoicing in God as theirs, and bring the fheave avaid available and to

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of covenant bleffings and comforts with them, Pfal-

(1.) We have reason to bewail our natural estrangement from this covenant. When we come to be for God we have reason to be affected with forrow and hame, that ever we were for any other; that ever here should have been occasion for our reconciliation to God, which supposeth that there hath been'a quarrel Wretch that I am, ever to have been a stranger, an nemy to the God that made me : at war with my Creaor, and in league with the rebels against his crown and dignity! O the folly, and wickedness, and misery f my natural estate! My first father an Amorite, and w mother a Hittite, and myfelf a transgressor from he womb, alienated from the life of God, and cast out my pollution. Nothing in me levely, nothing amile, but a great deal loathsome and abominable. Such this was my nativity, my original, Ezck. xvi. 2.

(2.) We have reason to bewait our backwardness to ome into this covenant. Well may we be assumed think how long God called, and we resused; how it he stretched forth his hand before we regarded! ow many offers of mercy we slighted, and how many ind invitations we stood it out against; how long thritt stood at the door and knocked before we opened to him; and how many frivolous excuses we made to ut off this necessary work. What a sool was I to and in mine own light so long? How ungrateful to be God of love, who waited to be gracious? How unstilly might I have been for ever excluded this coveant, who so long neglected that great salvation?

Vherefore I abhor myfelf.

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(3.) We have reason to bewail the disagreeableness our hearts and lives to the terms of this covenant, are first we prosessed our consent to it. In many inances we have dealt soolishly, it is well if we have of dealt saliely in the covenant. In our baptism we

were given up to Christ to be his, but we have lived as if we were our own; we then put on the Chiftian livery, but we have done little of the Christian's work; we were called by Christ's name to take away our repreach, but how little have we been under the conduct and government of the Spirit of Christ? Since we became capable of acting for ourfelves, perhaps we have oft renewed our covenant with God, at his table and upon other occasions, but we have despised the oath, " in breaking the covenant, when lo, we had "given the hand," Ezek. xvii. 18. Our performance have not answered the engagements we have folemning laid ourselves under. Did we not say, and say it with the blood of Christ in our hands. That we would he the faithful fervants of the God of heaven? we did and yet, instead of ferving God, we have ferved diven hofts and pleafures, we have made ourselves slaves the flesh, and drudges to the world; and " this had been our manner from our youth up." Did we no fay, " We would not transgress," Jer. ii. 20. would not offend any more?" Job. xxiv. 31. W did, and yet, "our transgressions are multiplied, and "in many things we offend daily." Did we not far we would walk more closely with God, more circum fpectly in our conversation; we would be better our closets, better in our families, better in our cal ings, every way better? We did, and yet we are fi vain, and carelefs, and unprofitable : all those go purposes have been to little purpose: this is a lame tation, and should be for a lamentation. Let of hearts be truly broken for our former breach of com nant with God, and then the renewing of our con nant will be the recovery of our peace, and that while was broken shall be bound up, and made to rejoice

Secondly, We must renounce the devil, the work and the sless, and every thing that stands in opposition to, or competition with, the God to whom we per the stands of the

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e joi felvi ourselves by covenant. If we will indeed deal fincerely in our covenanting with God, and would be accepted of him therein, our "covenant with death must be dif-"annulled, and our agreement with hell must not "fland," Ifa, xxviii. 18. All thefe foolish, sinful bargains, which were indeed null and void from the beginning, by which we had alienated ourselves from our rightful owner, and put ourlelves in possession of the usurper, must be revoked and cancelled, and our confent to them drawn back with disdain and abhorence. When we take an oath of allegiance to God and Christ, as our rightful king and sovereign, we must therein adjure the tyranny of the rebellious and rival powers. "O Lord our God, other lords belides thee "have had dominion over us," while fin hath reigned in our mortal bodies, in our immortal fouls, and every will hath been a lord; but now we are weary of that heavy yoke, and through God's grace it shall be fo no longer: for, from henceforth, "by thee only will we "make mention of thy name," Ifa. xxvi. 13.

The covenant we are to enter into is a marriage covenant, "Thy Maker is to be thy husband," If a. liv. 5. and thou art to be betrothed to him, Hos. ii. 19. and it is the antient and fundamental law of that covenant, that all other lovers be renounced, all other beloved ones for sken; and the same is the law of this covenant, Hos. iii. 3. "Thou shalt not be for another "man, To will I also be for thee." Quitting all others, we must cleave to the Lord only; lovers and crowned heads will not endure rivals: on these terms, and no other. we may covenant with God, I Sam. vii. 3. "If "ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, "then put away the strange gods, and Ashtaroth,"

elle it is not a return to God.

(1.) We must renounce all subjection to Satan's rule and government. Satan's seat must be overturned in our hearts, and the Redeemer's throne set up there

upon the ruins of it. We must disclaim the devil's power over us, cast off that iron yoke, and resolve to be deceived by him no more, and led captive by him at his will no more. We must quit the service of the citizen of that country, and feed his swine no longer, seed upon his husks no more, that we may return to our Father's house, where there is bread enough and to spare. We most renounce the treacherous conduct of the evil spirit, that we may put ourselves under the gracious guidance of the holy and good spirit. All that turn to God, must turn from the power of Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. For what communion hath Christ with Belial; our covenant with God engageth us in a war with Satan; for the controversy between them is such as will by no means allow us to stand neuter.

(2.) We must renounce all compliance with the wills and interests of the flesh. The body, though near and dear to the foul, yet must not be allowed to have dominion over it. The liberty, fovereignty, and honour of the immortal Spirit, by which we were allied to the upper world; that world of spirits mult be afferted, vindicated, and maintained against the usurpation and encroachments of the body, which is of the earth earthly, and by which we are allied to the beaft that perifh. The elder too long hath ferved they yonger, the nobler hath ferved the bafer; it is time that the yoke should be broken from off its neck, and that that part of the man should rule under Christ, whose right it is. The servants on horse back must be dismounted, the lust of the fielh depied, and its will no longer admitted to give law to the man; and the princes who have walked like fervants upon the earth, mnft be raifed from the dunghill, and made to inherit the throne of glory; the dictates, I mean of right reason, guided by revelation, and confulting the true interest of the better part, must have the commanding sway and empire in us, Eccl. x. 7. x Sam.

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good to have the field pleased, and the desires of it gratified; nor ever make it our chief business to make provision for the flesh, that we may fulfil the lusts of it. Away with them, away with them; crucify them, crucify them; for, like Barrabbas, they are robbers, they are murderers, they are enemies to our peace: We will not have them to reign over us: No, no, we know them too well; we have no king but

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(3.) We must renounce all dependance upon this present world, and conformity to it. If we enter into a covenant which enfures us a happinels in the other world, on which we look with a holy concern, we must disclaim the expectations of happiness in this world, and therefore look upon this with a holy contempt. God and mamon, God and gain, these are contrary the one to the other; fo that, if we will be found loving God, and cleaving to him, we must despite the world, and fet loofe to that, Matth. vi. 34. We must to far renounce the way of the world, as not to govern ourselves by that, and take our principles and meafures from it; for we must not be confirmed to this world, Rom. xii. 2. nor walk according to the course of it, Eph. ii. 2. We must so far renounce the men of the world, as not to incorporate ourselves with them. nor choose them for our people; because, though we are in the world, we are not of the world, nor have we received the fpirit of the world, but Christ hath chofen and called us out of it, John xv. 19. We must to far renounce the wealth of the world, as not to portion ourfelves out of it, nor lay up our treasure in it; nor to take up with the things of this world, as our good things, Luke xvi. 25. as our confolation, Luke vi. 24. as our reward, Mat. vi. 2. as the penny we agree for, Matth. xx. r3. For in God's favour is our life, and not in the smiles of this world. The H 2

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Lord make us cordial in thus renouncing these conpetitors, that we may be found fincere in covenanting

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with God in Christ.

Thirdly, We must receive the Lord Jesus Christ. as he is offered to us in the gospel. In renewing our covenants with God, it is not enough to enter our dif. sent from the world and the flesh, and to shake of Satan's yoke, but we must enter our consent to Christ, and take upon us, his yoke. In the everlaiting gospel, both as it is written in the feripture, and as it is fealed in this facrament, falvation by Christ, that great falvation, is fairly tendered to us, to us who need it, and are undone for ever without it: We then come into covenant with God, when we accept of this falvation, with an entire complacency and confidence in those methods which infinite wisdom hath taken, of reconciling a guilty and obnoxious world to himfelf, by the mediation of his own Son, and a cheerful compliance with those methods for ourselves and our own falvation. Lord, I take thee at thy word; be it unto thy fervant according to that word, which is to well ordered in all things and to fure.

We must accept the salvation in Christ's way, and upon his terms, else our acceptance is not accepted.

(1.) by a hearty confent to the grace of Christ, we must accept the salvation in his own way, in such a way as for ever excludes boatting, humbles man to the dust, and will admit no flesh to glory in his presence: fuch a way as, though it leaves the blood of them that berish upon their own heads, yet lays all the crowns of them that are faved at the feet of free grace. This method we must approve of, and love this falvation; not going about to establish our own righteoutness, as if, by pleading not guilty, we could answer the demands of the covenant of innocency, and fo be justified and faved by that; but submitting to the rightcoulness of God by faith, Rom, x. 3. All the concerns that

that lie between us and God we must put into the hands of the Lord Jesus, as the great Mediator, the great manager; we must be content to be nothing, that the Lord alone may be exalted, and Christ may be all in all. God hath declared more than once by a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I "am well pleased:" To consent to Christ's grace, and accept of salvation in his way, is to eche back to that solemn declaration—This is my beloved Saviour in whom I am well pleased: The Lord be will pleased with me in him; for out of him I can expect no savour.

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(2.) By a hearty consent to the government of Christ, we must accept the falvation on his own terms. When we receive Christ, we must receive an entire Christ; for, "Is Christ divided?" A Christ to fanctify and rule us, as well as a Christ to justify and fave us; for he is a priest upon his throne, and the council of peace is between them both, Zech. vi. 13. What God has joined together, let us not think to put afunder. He faves his people from their fins, not in their fins; and is the author of eternal redemption to those only that obey him. That very " grace of God " which bringeth falvation, teacheth us to deny un-"godliness and worldly and fleshly lusts, and to live "foberly, righteoully and godly in this world," Titus ii. 11, 12. Life and peace are to be had on thele terms, and on no other: And are we willing to come up to these terms? Will we receive Christ and his law, as well as Christ and his love? Christ and his cross as well as Christ and his crown? Lord, I will, faith the believing foul, Lord, I do; My beloved is mine, and I am his," to all the insents and purpoles of the covenant.

Fourthly, We must resign and give up ourselves to God in Christ. God in our covenant makes over not only his gifts and savours but himself to us, [I will be to them a God.] What he is in himself, he will be to

us a God all-sufficient; so we in the covenant must affer up, not only our fervices but ourfelves, our own selves, our whole selves, body, soul, and spirit, to God the Father Son and holy Ghoff, according to the ob ligations of our baptilm, as those that are bound to be to him a people. This furrender is to be folemply made at the Lord's table, and fealed there; it must therefore be prepared and made ready before. Let us fee to it, that it be carefully drawn up without exception or limitation, and the heart examined, whether a a free and full confent be given to it. We must find give our own felves unto the Lord, 2 Cor. viii. 5. and know not how we can dispose of ourselves better. By the mercies of God, which are inviting, and very encouraging, we must be wrought upon to prefent our bodies and fouls to God a living facrifice of acknowledgement, not a dying facrifice of atonement, which if it be holy, shall be acceptable, and it is our reason able fervice, Rom. sil. 1. Thus he that covenant with God, is directed to fay, "I am the Lord's, and " for the greater folemnity of the transaction, to sub-"feribe with his hand unto the Lord," Ifa. xliv. 5. Not that we do, or can hereby transfer or convey to God any right to us which he had not before: He's our absolute Lord and Owner, and hath an incontestible fovereignity over us and propriety in us, as he's our Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, and Redeemer: But hereby we recognize and acknowledge his right We are his already by obligation, more his than our own: But, that we may have the benefit and comfort of being fo, we must be his by our own confent. More particlarly,

(1.) To refign ourselves to God, is "to dedicate "and devote ourselves to his praise." It is not enough to call ourselves by his name, and herd ourselves among those that do so, to take away our reproach: But we must consecrate ourselves to his name,

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as living temples. It is a gift, a gift to God, all I am. all I have, all I can do is lo; it is a dedicated thing, which it is facrilege to alienate. All the powers and faculties of our fouls, all the parts and members of our bodies we must, as those that are alive from the dead. freely yield unto God as instruments of righteoninels. to be used and employed in his service for his glory, Rom. vi. 13. All our endowments, all our attaitsments, all those things we call accomplishments, must be accounted as talents, which we must trade with for his honour. All being of him and from him, all must be to him and for him. Our tongues must not be our own, but his in nothing to offend him, but to fpeak his praife, and plead his cause, as there is occasion: Our time not our own, but as a servant's time, to be frent according to our master's directions, and some way or other to our master's glory, every day, being in this fense, our Lord's day: Our estates not our own, to be spent or spared by the direction of our lusts. but to be used as God directs; "God must be hon-"oured with our fubstance," Prov. iii. o. " And our "merchandize and our hire must be holiness to the "Lord," Ifa. xxiii. 18. Our interest not our own. with it to feek our own glory, but to be improved in feeking and ferving God's glory; that is, God's glory must be fixed and aimed at, as our highest and ultimate end, in all the care we take about our employments. and all the comforts we take in our enjoyments. "As good flewards of the manifold grace of God," we must have this still in our eye, "that God in all things may "be glorified through Jesus Christ," 1 Pet iv. 10, 11. By this pious attention common actions must be fanctified, and done 'after a godly fort,' 3 John, ver. 6. Our giving up ourselves to be to God a people, is thus explained, Jer. xiii. 11. it is, " to be to him for a name and for a praife, and for a glory."

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- (2.) To refign ourselves to God, "is to subject and "fubmit ourselves to his power:" to the sanctifying power of his Spirit, the commanding power of his law, and the disposing power of his providence. Such as this is the subjection we must consent to, and it hath in it so much of privilege and advantage, as well as duty and service, that we have no reason to sumble at it.
- (1.) We must submit ourselves to the sanctifying power of God's Spirit. We must lay our fouls as foil wax under this feat, to receive the impressions of it: as white paper under this pen, that it may write the lew there. Whereas, we have relifted the Holy Ghoff. quenched his motions, and striven against him when he hath been firiving with us. We must now yield our felves to be led and influenced by him, with full purpole of heart in every thing to follow his conduct, and comply with him. When Christ in his gospel breather on us, faying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," John xx.
  22. my heart must answer, "Lord I receive him," I bid him welcome into my heart; though he comes as a Spirit of Judgment, and a Spirit of burning, as a refiner's fire, and fuller's foap; yet, "Bleffed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Let him come and mortify my lufts and corruptions, I do not defire that any of them fliould be spared: let them die, let them die by the sword of the Spirit, Agag himself not excepted, though he comes delicately. Let every thought within me, even the inward thought, Pfal. xlix. II. " be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. z. 5. Let the bleffed Spirit do his whole work in me, and fulfil it with an Almighty power.

(2.) We must submit ourselves to the commanding power of God's law. The law, as it is in the hand of the Mediator, is God's instrument of government; if yield myself to him as a subject, I most in every thing be observant of, and obedient to that law, and now I

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covenant to be fo, in all my way to walk according to that rule; all my thoughts and affections, all my words and actions shall be under the direction of the divine law, and subject to its check and restaint. God's judgments will I lay before me, and have respect to all his commandments; by them I will always be ruled, over-ruled. "Let the word of the Lord come (as a good man once faid) and if I had fix hundred necks, I would bow them all to the authority of it." Whatever appears to me to be my duty, by the grace of God I will do it, how much foever it interfere with my fecular interest; whatever oppears to me to be a fin, by the grace of God I will avoid it, and refrain from it, how strong soever my corrupt inclination may be to it: "All that the Lord shall say to me, I will do, and will be obedient."

(3.) We must submit ourselves to the disposing pown of God's providence. This must be the rule of our patience and paffive obedience, as the former of our practice and active obedience. All my affairs relating to this life, I chearfully submit to the divine difposal; let them be directed and determined as infinite wifdom fees fit, and I will acquiefce. Let the Lord fave my foul, and then as to every thing elfe, "let him do with me and mine as feemeth good unto him;" I will never find fault with any thing that God doth. "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." I know I have no wisdom of my own: I am a fool if I lean to my own understanding: And therefore I will have no will of my own: Father, thy will be done. The health of my body, the fuccess of my calling, the prosperity of my estate, the agreeableness of my family, the continuance of my comforts, and the iffue of any particular concern, my heart is open, I leave in the hands of my heavenly Father, who knows what is good for me better than I do for myself; if in any of these I be croffed, by the grace of God I will fubmit without murmuring

murmuring or disputing: All is well that God doth, and therefore welcome the will of God, in even event; while he is mine and I am his, nothing sual come amis to me.

Fifthly, We must resolve to abide by it as long a we live, and to live up to it. In our covenanting with God there must be, not only a present consent, Lord do take thee for mine, I'do give up myfelf to thee to be thine; but this must be ripened into a resolution for the future, " with purpose of heart to cleave unit "the Lord," Acts xi. 23. We must tay hold on wife dom, to as to retain her, Prov. iii. 18. and chuse the way of truth, fo as to flick to it, Pfal. exix. 30, 31, "The nail in the holy place," Ezra viii. 9. "must be " well cleanfed, that it may be a nail in a fure place" Ha. xxii. 23. Many a pang of good affections, and many a hopeful turn of good inclinations, comes to mothing for want of resolution. It is faid of Rehobean 2 Chron. xii. 14. that he "did evil, because he prepared not, or he fixed not his heart;" so, the word is in the margin, to feek the Lord: The heart that is unfixed is unprepared. Johna took pains with the people of bring them up to that noble refolution, Josh. xxiv. 21. "Nay, but we will ferve the Lord:" and we floud not be content till we are also in like manner resolved and firmly fixed for God and duty, for Christ and he ven. This is the preparation of the gospel of peace wherewith our feet must be shod, Eph. vi. 15.

Let us inquire what that refolution is, which, in a entire dependence upon the grace of Christ, we should come up into our everlasting covenanting with God

(1.) We must come up to such a settled resolution as doth not reserve a power of revocation for our selves: The covenant is in itself a perpetual covenant, and as such we must consent to it: not as servants therefore for a year, or to be free at a quarter's warning; not as apprentices bind themselves for seven years.

But it must be a covenant for life, a covenant for eternity, a covenant never to be forgotten, and in this
even beyond the marriage-covenant; for that is made
with this proviso, Till death us do part; but death itelf must not part us and Christ. Our covenant must
be made like that servant's who loved his master, and
would not go out free; our cars must be nailed to
God's door post, and we must resolve to serve him for
ever, Exod. xxi. 5, 9. A power of revocation reserved
is a deceasance of the covenant; it is no bargain if it
as not for a perpetuity, and if we consent not to put
t past recal.

Let not those that are young, and under tutors and governers, think to discharge themselves of those obligations, when they come to be of age, and to put hem off with their childsh things: No, you must relive to adhere to it, as Moses did, when you come to wars, Heb. xi. 24. As children are not too little, so grown people are not too big to be religious. You must resolve to live under the bonds of this covenant, when you come to live of yourselves, to be at your own disposal, and to launch out never so far into this world. Your greatest engagements in care and business cannot disengage you from these. Whatever late of of life you are called to, you must resolve to

Let not those who are in the midst of their days think it possible or distreable to outlive the binding orce of this covenant. It now we set out in the way we should go, it must be with a resolution, if we live to be old, how wise and honourable soever old age be, yet then we "will not depart from it," Prov. xxii. 6. as knowing that the hoary hairs are then only "a grown of glory when they are found," as having been

ong before fixed, " in the way of righteoufness,"

ake your religion with you into it.

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as will not yield to the power of temptation from the enemy. When we engage ourselves for God, we engage ourselves against Satan, and must expect his ut most efforts to oppose us in our way, and to draw us out of it. Against these designs we must therefore arm ourselves, resolving to stand in the evil day, and having done all in God's name to stand our ground, Eph. vi. 13. saying to all that which would either divert or deter us from prosecuting the choice we have made, as Ruth did to Naomi, when she was stedsally resolved, Ruth i. 16. intreat me not to leave Christ, or turn from sollowing after him; for whether he goes, I will sollow him, thought it be to banishment; where he lodges I will lodge with him, though it he in a prison; for death itself shall never part us.

We must resolve, by God's grace, never to be so elevated or enamoured with the smiles of the world as by them to be allured from the paths of serious godliness; for our religion will be both the safety and honour of a prosperous condition, and will fanctify

and Iweeten all the comforts of it to us.

And we must in like manner resolve never to be so discouraged and disheartened by the frowns of the world, as by the force of them to be robbed of our jay in God, or by the sear of them to be driven from our duty to God. We must come to Christ with a steady resolution to abide by him all weathers: Lord, I will follow thee whitherseever thou goest. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Now of these things move me.

firength of our Lord Jesus Christ in all this. Christ is the Mediator of this peace, and the guarantee of it, the surety of this better covenant, that blessed daysman, which hath laid his hand upon us both, who hath so undertaken for God, that "in him all God's

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"promifes to us, are yea and Amen," 2 Cor i. 20. and, unless he under takes for us too, how can our promises to God have any strength or stability in them? when therefore we enter into covenant with God, our eye must be to Christ, the Alpha and Omega of that covenant. When God had "fworn by him-"felf, that unto him every knee should bow, and "every tongue shall swear," Ifa. xlv. 23. immediately it follows, ". "fe 24. "Surely shall one fay," every one that vows and fwears to God, " In the Lord have I righteoufness and Arength," in the Lord Jesus is all my fufficiency for the doing of this well. In making and renewing our covenant with God, we must take instructions from that of David, Psal. Ixxi. 16. "I will go on in the strength of the Lord God; I " will make mention of thy rightcourners, even of "thine only.

(1.) We must depend upon the strength of the Lord God for assistance, and for the working of all our works in us and for us. In that strength we must go, go forth, and go on, as those that know we can do nothing that is good of ourselves; our own hands are not sufficient for us, but we can "do all things "through Christ strengthening us," Phil. iv. 13. Our work then goes on, and then only, when we are "strengthened with all might by his Spirit." This way we must look for spiritual strength, as Nehemiah, ch. iv. 9. "Now, therefore, O God strengthen my "hands." On this strength we must stay ourselves, in this strength we must engage ourselves, and put forth ourselves, and with it we must encourage ourselves.

We cannot keep this covenant when it is made, but in the strength of Christ; not make it at all. Nature, corrupt nature, inclines to the world and the steff and cleaves to them; without the influences of special grace, we should never move towards God, much less resolve for him: we cannot do it well, but in Christ's strength,

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and in a dependance upon that. If, like Peter, we venture on our own sufficiency, and use those forms of speech which import a reliance on the divine grace, only as words of course, and do not by faith trust to that grace, and derive from it, we forseit the aids of it, our covenant is rejected as presumptuous, and shall not avail us. Promises made in our own strength betray us, and do not help us, like the house built on the sand.

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We cannot keep this covenant when it is made, but in the strength of Christ: for we stand no longer than he by his grace upholds us; we go no further than he by his grace not only leads us, but carries us. His promises to us are our security, not ours to him; from his fulness, therefore, we must expect to receive grace for grace; for it is not in ourselves, nor is it to be had any where but in him. We then that are principals in the bond, knowing ourfelves infolvent, must put him in as furety for us: he is willing to fland, and without him our bond will not be taken; we are too well known to be trufted; for all men are liars, and the heart is deceitful above all things. Go to Christ therefore with that address, Pfal. cxix. 122. "Be furety for "thy fervant for good," Ifa. xxxviii. 14. "I am opst prefied, undertake for me. 381 16 th and 8319

Christ, making mention of that, even of that only, for acceptance with God in our covenanting with him. We have nothing in us to recommend us to God's favour, no righteousness of our own wherein to appear before him; we have by sin not only forseited all the blessings of the covenant, but incapacitated ourselves for admission into it: by facrifice therefore, by a facrifice of atonement, sufficient to expiate our guilt, and satisfy the demands of injured justice, we must make a covenant with God; and there is none such but that one offering by which Christ hath "perfected for ever "them

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when which are fanctified;" that is the blood of the covenant, which must be sprinkled upon our consciences, when we join ourselves to the Lord, Exod .xxiv. 8. That everlasting righteousness which Messiah the Prince hath brought in, must be the cover of our spiritual nakedness, our wedding garment to adorn our nuptials, and the foundation on which we must build all our hopes to find favour in the fight of the Lord.

I shall not here draw up a form of covenanting with God, both because such may be found drawn up by far better hands than mine, as Mr Baxter's, Mr Allien's and other's, and because a judicious Christian may, out of the foregoing heads, easily draw up one for himself.

For the 2d thing; after what manner we must renew our covenant with God, that we may therein please God, and experience the good effect of it in our own souls.

(1.) We must do it intelligently. Blind promises will produce lame performances, and can never be acceptable to the feeing God: ignorance is not the mother of this devotion' Satan indeed puts out mens eyes, and fo brings them into bondage to him and leads them blindfold: for he is a thief and a robber, that comes not in by the door, but climbeth up fome other way; and therefore to him we must not open; but the grace of God takes the regular way of dealing with reasonable creatures; opening the understanding first, and then bowing the will: this is entering in by the door, as the shepherd of the sheep doth, John x. 1, 2. In this method therefore we must see that the work be done. We must first acquaint ourselves with the tenor of the covenant, and then confent to the terms of it. Moses read the book of the covenant in the audience of the people, Exod. xxiv. 7. and then iprinkled upon them the blood of the covenant, verfe 8. And we must take the same method; first peruse

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the articles, and then fign them. That faith which is without knowledge, is not the faith of God's elect. (2.) We must do it considerately. We need not take time to confider whether we should do it or no. the matter is too plain to bear that debate; but we must feriously consider what we do, when we go about it. Let it be done with a folemn paufe, fuch as Moses put Ifrael upon, when he faid, Deut. xxix. 10. 12. " Ye fland this day all of you before the "Lord your God-that thou shouldst enter into cove " nant with the Lord my God, and into his oath." Confider how wieghty the transaction is, that it may be managed with due férioufnels; and of what confequence it is that it be done well: for it is to be hoped, it it be once well done, it is done for ever. We must fit down and count the cost, consider the re-Araints this covenant will put upon the flesh, the loss and expence we may fustain by our adherence to it, the hazards we run, and the difficulties we must reckon upon, if we will be faithful unto death; and in the view of this confent to the covenant, that hereafter, when tribulation and perfecution arifeth because of the word, we may not fay, This was what we did not think of. Do it deliberately therefore, and then it will not be eafily undone. The rule in vowing is, " Be not rash with thy mouth, neither let thy heart " be hally to utter any thing before God," Eccl. v. 2. It is the character of a virtuous woman that " the confiders a field, and buys it." And it hath been thought a dictate of prudence, though it feem a paradox, "Take time, and you will have done the "fooner." Many that, without confideration, hath put on a profession, when the wind hath turned, hath, in like maner, without confideration, thrown it of again. Light come, light go, Those, therefore, that herein would prove themselves honest, must prove therefelves wife. (3.) We

(3.) We must do it humbly. When we come to covenant with God, we must remember what we are. and who he is with whom we have to do that the familiarity we are graciously admitted, to may not beget a concempt of God, or a conceit of ourselves; but rather, the more God is pleased to exalt us, and condescend to us, the more we must honour him. and abase ourselves, "Abraham fell on his face," in a deep fense of his own unworthiness, then when God faid, "I will make my covenant between me and thee, and began to talk with him concerning it. Gen. zvii. 2. 3. And afterwards when he was admitted into an intimate communion with God, pursuant to that covenant, he drew near as one that knew his distance, expressing himself with wonder at the favour done him, Gen. xviii. 27. "Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but "dust and ashes." When the covenant of royalty was confirmed to David, and "God regardeth him "according to the estate of a man of high de-"gree, he fits down as one aftonished at the honour conferred upon him, and humbly expresseth himself thus, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine "house, that thou halt brought me hitherto?" 2 Chron, xvii. 16, 17. Thus must we cast ourselves down at the footstool of God's throne, if we would be taken up into the embraces of his love. He that humbles himself, shall be exalted.

(4.) We must do it chearfully; for here in a special manner, God loves a chearful giver, and is pleased with that which is done, not of constraint, but willingly. In our covenanting with God, we must not be actuated by a spirit of bondage and sear, but by a spirit of adoption, a spirit of power and love, and a sound mind, Rom. viii. 15. 2 Tim. i. 7. We must join ourselves to the Lord, not only because it is our duty, and that which we are bound to, but because it is our

interest, and that by which we shall be unspeakable gainers, not with reluctancy and regret, and with a half consent extorted from us, but with an entire fatisfaction, and the full confent of a free spirit. Let it be a pleasure to us to think of our interest in God as ours; and our engagement to him as his: a pleasure to us to think of the bonds of the covenant, as well as of the bleffings of the covenant. Much of our communion with God (which is so much the delight of all that are fanctified) is kept up by the frequent recognition of our covenant with him, which we should make as those that like our choice too well to change; and as the men of Judah did, when "they " fware unto the Lord with a loud voice, and with " fliouting, and with trumpets; and all Judah rejoiced " at the oath; for they had fworn with all their " heart, and fought him with their whole defire." 2 Chron. xv. 14, 15. Christ's soldiers must be volunteers, not preffed men; and we must repeat our confent to him with fuch joy and triumph as appears in that of the spouse, Cant. v. 16. "This is my beloved, " and this is my friend."

(5.) We must do it in sincerity: this is the chief thing required in every thing wherein we have to do with God; "Behold, he desires truth in the inward "parts." When God took Abraham into covenant with himself, this was the charge he gave him, "Walk "before me, and be thou perfect," that is, upright; for uprightness is our gospel perfection. Writing the covenant, and subscribing it, signing and sealing it, may be proper expressions of seriousness and resolution in the transaction, and of use to us in the review: but, if herein we "lie unto God with our mouth, and slatter him with our tongue," as Israel did, Psal. lxxviii 36. though we may put a cheat upon ourselves and others yet we cannot impose upon him; "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." If we only give the

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hand unto the Lord, and do not give our hearts to him, whatever our pretentions, professions, and present pangs of devotion may be, we are but as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal. What will it avail us to say, we covenant with God, if we still keep our league with the world and the slesh, and have a sceret antipathy to serious godlines? Dissembled piety is no disguise before God, but is hated as double iniquity. It is certain thou hast no part nor lot in the matter, whatever thou mayst claim, if thy heart be not right in the sight of God, Acts viii. 21. I know no religion but sincerity: our vows to God are nothing, if they be not bonds upon the soul.

## C H A P. VI. lies of the

Helps for Meditation and Prayer, in our Preparation for the Ordinance.

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MEditation and prayer are the daily exercise and delight of a devout and pious soul. In meditation we converse with ourselves; in prayer we converse with God: and what converse can we desire more agreeable and more advantages? They who are frequent and serious in these holy duties at other times, will find them the easier, and the sweeter on this occasion; the friends we are much with, we are most free with: but if, at other times, we be not so close and constant to them as we should be, we have the more need to take pains with our own hearts, that we may effectually engage them in these services, when we approach the ordinance of the Lord's supper.

Enter into thy closet, therefore, and that the door of that against diversions from without be not shy of being alone. The power of godliness withers and declines, if secret devotion be either neglected, or ne-

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gligently performed. Enter into thy heart also, and do what thon canst to shut the door of that against distraction from within. Compose thyself for business, and summon all that is within thee to attend on it, separate thyself from the world, and the thoughts of it: leave all its cares at the bottom of the hill, as Abraham did his servants, when he was going up into the mount to worship God, Gen. xxii. 5. and then set thyself about thy work; gird up thy loins, and trim thy lamps. Up, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.

(1.) We must set ourselves to meditate on that which is most proper for the confirming of our faith, and the kindling of pious and devout affections in us. Good thoughts should be oft in our minds, and welcome there, so should our souls oft breathe towards God in pious ejaculations, that are short and sudden: but as good prayers, so good thoughts, must sometimes be set, and solemn; morning and evening they must be so, on the Lord's day also, and before the Lord's Supper.

Meditation is thought engaged, and thought en-

flamed:

(1.) It is thought engaged; in it the heart fastens upon, and fixes to, a felect and certain fubject, with an endeavour to dwell and enlarge upon it: not matters of doubtful disputation, or small concern, but those things that are of greatest certainty and moment; and fince few of the ordinary fort of Christians can be supposed to have such a treasury of knowledge, such a fruitfulness of invention, and so great a compass and readiness of thought, as to be able to discourse with themselves for any time upon any one subject, so closely, methodically, and pertinently as one would with, it may be adviseable, either to fasten upon some portion of scripture, and to read that over and over, with a closeness of observation and application; or to recollect some profitable fermon lately heard, and think that over; or to make use of some books of pious meditations

ditations, or practical, discourses, (which blessed be God, we have great plenty and variety of in our own tongue) and not only read them, but defcant and enlarge upon them in our minds still giving liberty to our own thoughts to expatiate, as they are able; but borrowing help from what we read, to reduce them when they wander, refresh them when they tire and to furnish them with matter when they are barren. In the choice of helps for this work, wisdom and experience are profitable to direct, and no rule can be given to fit all capacities and all cases: the end may be attained in different methods.

(2.) It is thought enflamed. To meditate, is not only to think feriously of divine things, but to think of them with concern and fuitable affection. "While "we are thus mufing, the fire must burn," Pfal. xxxix. 3. When the heart meditates terror, Ifa. xxxiii. 18. the errors of the Lord, it must be with a holy fear: when we contemplate the beauty of the Lord, his bounty and his benignity, which is better than life, we must do it with a holy complacency, folacing ourfelves in the Lord our God: the defign of meditation is to improve our knowledge, and to effect ourselves with those things with which we have acquainted ourselves, that those impressions of them upon our souls may be deep and durable, and that, by " beholding the glory "of the Lord, we may be changed into the fame image."

Serious meditation before a facrament will be of great use to us, to make those things familiar to us, which in that ordinance we are to be conversant with; that good thoughts may not be to feek when we are there, it is our wisdom to prepare them, and lay them teady before hand. Frequent acts confirm a habit, and pious dispositions are greatly helped by pious melitations. Christian graces will be the better exercised in the ordinance when they are thus trained and difciplined, and drawn out in our preparation for it.

For our affistance herein, I shall mention some sew of those things which may most properly be pitched upon for the subject of our meditations before a sacrament: I say, before a sacrament, because though this be calculated here for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, yet it may equally serve us in our preparations for the other sacrament, both that we may prosit by the public administration of it, and especially that we may, in an acceptable manner, present our children to it; for which service we have as much need carefully to prepare ourselves as for this. As we must in saith join ourselves to the Lord, so we must in faith dedicate ourselves to him.

That our hearts then, may be raifed and quickened, and prepared for communion with Christ at his table,

First, Let us set ourselves to think of the sinfulness and misery of man's sallen state. That we may be taught to value our recovery and restoration by the grace of the second Adam, let us take a sull and distinct view of our ruin by the sin of the first Adam. Come and see what desolations it hath made upon the earth, and how it hath turned the world into a wilderness. "How is the gold become dim, and the most "fine gold changed?" What wretched work did sin make! What a black and horrid train of satal consequences attended its entrance into the word!

Come, my foul, and fee how the nature of man is corrupted and vitiated, and lamentably degenerated from its primitive purity and rectitude: God's image defaced and lost, and Satan's image stamped instead of it. The understanding blind, and unapt to admit the rays of the divine light; the will stubborn, and unapt to comply with the dictates of the divine law; the affections carnal, and unapt to receive the impressions of the divine love. Come, my foul and lament the change, for thou thyself seelest from it, and shares in the sad effects of it: for a nature thus tainted thus

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deprived, I brought into the world with me, and carry about with me to this day fad remainders of its corruption. It was a nature by creation, little lower than that of angels, but become by fin much baser than that of brutes. It was like the Nazarites, "purer "than fnow, whiter than milk, more ruddy than the "rubbies, and its polishing was of sapphires; but now "its vifage is blacker than a coal," Lam. iv. 7, 8. Never was beauty fo deformed, never was strength fo weakened, never was a healthful constitution fo spoiled, never was honour so laid in the dust. "How is the faithful city become an harlot? Man's "nature was planted a choice vine, wholly a right "feed; but alas it is become the degenerate plant of "a strange vine," Jer. ii. 21. I find it in myself by sad d backward to that which is good. Fooliffness is ally breaking out in my life, and by that I perceive, tis bound up in my heart; for these things I blush and am ashamed; for these things I tremble and am fraid : " for these things I weep, mine eye, mine eye runs down with tears," Lam. i. 16.
Come, my foul, and fee how miferable fallen man

Come, my foul, and fee how miserable sallen man s; see him excluded God's favour, expelled the garden of the Lord, and forbidden to meddle with the ree of life: see how odious he is become to God's homes, and obnoxious to his justice, and by nature a hild of wrath. See how calamitous the state of human life is; what troops of diseases, disasters and teaths, in the most horrid and srightful shapes, man is compassed about with. Lord, "how are the increased that trouble him?" See him attacked on every side by the malignant powers of darkness that seek to destroy: see him sentenced for an to utter darkness, to be devouring fire, to the everlasting burning. "How art thou sallen O Luciser, son of the morning?" what a gulph of misery is man sunk into by sin?

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separated from all good to all evil; and his condition in himself helpless and hopeless. A deplorable cases And it is my case by nature; I am of this guilty, exposed, condemned race; undone, undone for ever; as miserable as the curse of heaven, and the flames of hell can make me, if infinite mercy do not interpole, And shall not this effect me? Shall not this afflict me? Shall not these thoughts beget in me a hatred of fin, that evil, that only evil? Shall I ever be reconciled to that which hath done fo much mischief? Shall I not be quickened hereby to flee to Christ, in whom alone help and falvation is to be had? Is this thy condition, O my foul, thine by nature? and is there a door of hope opened to thee by grace? "Up, then, get the " out of this Sodom; escape for thy life, look not be "hind thee, flay not in all the plain, escape to the moun " tain, the mountain of holiness, lest thou be consumed."

"of the divine attributes, shining forth in the won of our redemption and salvation." Here is a bright and noble subject, the contemplation and wonder angels and blessed spirits above, and which eternity it self will be short enough to be spent in the admiring

view of.

Come then, O my foul, come and think of the kind nefs and love of God our Saviour, his good-will to man, which defigned our redemption; the Ipring an first wheel of that work of wonder. Herein is love Though God was happy from eternity before man had a being, and would have been happy to eternity, if man had never been, or had been miserable; though man nature was mean and despicable; though his crime were henious and detestable; though by his disobed ence he had forseited the protestion of a prince; though his ingratitude he had sorseited the kindness of friend; and though by his perfidiousness he had sorseited the benefits of a covenant; yet the tender mercies

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our God moved for his relief. Come and see a world of apostate angels passed by, and lest to perish, no Redeemer, no Saviour provided for them: but sallen men pitied and helped, though angels had been more honourable, and would have been more serviceable.

Come and think of God's patience and forbearance exercised towards man: "The long suffering of our "Lord is salvation." Think how much he bears, and how long, with the world, with me, though most provoking. This patience lest room for the salvation, and gives hopes of it. "If the Lord hath been pleased to kill us," he would have done it before now.

Come, and think especially of the wisdom of God which is fo gloriously displayed in the contrivance of the work of our redemption: Here is the wisdom of God "in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which "God ordained before the world for our glory," I Cor. ii. 7. Think of the measures God hath taken, the means he hath devised, that the banished "might not "be for ever expelled from him," 2 Sam. xiv. 14. Think with wonder how all the divine attributes are by the method pitched upon, feeured from danger and reproach, fo that one is not glorified by the diminution of the luftre of another. When fin had brought things to that strait, that one would think either God's justice, truth, and holiness, must be eclipsed or clouded, or man's happiness must be ever lost; infinite wifdom finds out an expedient for the fecuring both of God's honour, and of man's happiness: it is now no disparagement at all to God's justice to pardon sin, nor to his holiness to be reconciled to sinners; for by. the death of Christ, justice is satisfied, and by the spirit of Christ, finners are fanctified. " Mercy and truth "here met together; behold righteousness and peace "kis each other." Be astonished O heavens, at this, and wonder, O earth. And thou my foul, that owest all thy joys, and all thy hopes for this contrivance, despairing despairing to find the bottom of this unsathonable fountain of life, sit down at the brink, and adore the depth! "O the depth of wisdom and knowledge

of God!" Rom. xi. 33.

Thirdly, Let us fet ourselves to think of the "per"for of the Redeemer, and his glorious undertaking
"of the work of our salvation." Come, my soul, and
think of Christ, who thought of thee; think of him as
the eternal Son of God, "the brightness of his Fa"ther's glory, and the express image of his person,"
who lay in his bosom from all eternity, and had an insinite joy and glory with him before the worlds were,
and in whom dwells all the sulness of the Godhead;
the eternal wisdom, the eternal word, that hath life
in himself, and is one with the Father, and who
thought it no robbery to be equal with God. He is
thy Lord, O my soul, and worship thou him.

Think of him as the former of all things, without whom was not any thing made that was made. Thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things confift, Col. i. 16, 17. Let this engage my veneration for him, let this encourage my faith and hope in him: If I have my being from him, I must confecrate my being

to him, and may expect my blis in him.

Think of him as Emmanuel, the word incarnate, "God manifested in the slesh," clothed with our nature, taking part of slesh and blood, that for us in our nature he might satisfy the justice of God whom he had offended, and break the power of Satan, by whom we are enslaved. Come, my foul, and with an eye of saith, behold the beauties, the transcendent, unparableled beauties, of the Redeemer. See him, "white "and ruddy, sairer than the children of men," pescelly pure and spotless, wise and holy, kind and good, that he hath the infinite mercies of a God, and withal, the

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experimental compassions of a man, that hath been "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." See him byfaith, as John saw him in a vision, Rev. i. 13. &c. See him, and admire him, as one that in all things hath the pre-eminence; none like him, or any to be

compared with him.

Think of him as the undertaker of our redemption, the redemption of the foul, which was fo precious, that otherwise it must have ceased for ever. When the fealed book of God's counfels concerning man's redemption was produced, " none in heaven or earth "was found worthy to open that book, or to look "thereon," Rev. v. 3, 4. When facrifice and offering for fin would not do, and the blood of bulls and of goats had been tried in vain, and found ineffectual, then hid he, "Lo, I come; this ruin shall be under my "hands;" alluding to Ifa. iii. 6. Come, my foul, and te help laid upon one that is mighty; one chosen out of the people, and every way qualified for the undertaking, able to do the Redeemer's work, and fit to vear the Redeemer's crown. See how willingly he offered himself to the service, how chearfully he obliged himself to go through with it, and engaged his heart to approach unto God as our advocate. It is "the voice of thy Beloved, O my foul; behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills, making nothing of the difficulties that lay in his way. Behold, the King cometh, thy Bridegroom cometh; go forth my foul, go forth to meet him with thy joyful hofannas, and bid him welcome. Bleffed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Fourthly, Let us fet ourselves to think of the "cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the dishonours done to him, and the honours done to us by it" Here is a wide eld for our meditations to expatiate in, nor can we determine to know any thing before a sacrament more toper and profitable than Jesus Christ, and him cru-

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cified :

cified; lifted up from the earth, and drawing all men unto him, as the attractive load stone of their hearts, and the common centre of their unity. Come then, and behold the man; represent to thyself, O my soul, not to thy fancy, but to thy faith, "the Lamb of God" taking away the sins of the world by the sacrifice of himself

Come and look over the particulars of Christ's fulferings, all the humiliations and mortifications of his life, but especially the pains, agonies, and ignominies of his death. Review the story, thou wilt still find fomething in it furprising and very affecting: take no. tice of all the circumstances of his passion, and fay, "Never was any forrow like unto his forrow.". Take notice especially of the disgrace and reproach done him in his fufferings, the shame he was industriously loaded with. This contributed greatly to the fatisfaction made by his fufferings. God hath been injured in his glory by fin; and no other way could be injured; he therefore who undertook to make reparation for that injury, not only denied himself in, and divested himself of, the honours due to an incarnate Diety, but, though most innocent and most excellent, voluntarily fubmitted to the utmost difgraces that could be done to the worst of criminals: thus he "restored to that " which he took not away." See him, my foul fee him " enduring the crofs, and despising the shame."

Come and see the purchases of the cross. The blood there shed is the ransom with which we are redeemed from hell; the prize with which heaven is bought for us: see it a prize of inestimable value: "The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor shall it be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx of the sapphire." No, my soul, thou wast not redeemed with such corruptible things. The pardon of sin the savour of God the graces of his spirit, the blessings of the covenant, and eternal life, could no

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be purchased with silver and gold, but are dearly bought and paid for with the precious blood of the Son of God. All the praise be to the glorious purchaser.

Come and fee the victories of the cross; fee the Lord Jesus even then a conqueror, when he seemed a captive; then spoiling principalities and powers, when he seemed totally deseated and routed by them. See Christ upon the cross, breaking the serpent's head, disarming Satan, triumphing over death and the grave, leading captivity captive, and going forth in that chariot of war, conquering, and to conquer.

Think, my foul, think what thou owest to the dying of the Lord Jesus: the privileges of thy way, and the glorious of thy home; all thou hast, all thou hopest for that is valuable, they are all precious fruits gathered from this tree of life. Christ's wounds are thy healing, his agonies thy repose, his constitute thy conquests, his grouns thy songs, his pains thine ease, his shame thy slory, his death thy life, his sufferings thy salvation.

Fittbly, Let us fet ourselves to think of the present glories of the exalted Redeemer. When we meditate on the erofs he bore, we must not forget the crown he wears within the vail. Think, my foul, think where he s at the right hand of the Father, far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named; he is fet down upon the throne of the Majesty in the highest heavens. Having obtained eternal redemption for us, he is "entered with his own blood into the "toly place." Think how is he attended there with in innumerable company of angels that continually furfound the throne of God and of the Lamb; think of the longs there fung to his praise, the crowns there cast at his feet, and the name he hath there above every name. Think especially what he is doing there: he always ap pears in the presence of God as the great high priest four profession, to intercede for all those that come 6 God by him; and he attends continually to this

very thing; there he is preparing a place for all his followers, and thence he will shortly come to receive them to himself, to behold his glory, and to share in it.

Dwell on these thoughts, O my soul, and say as they did, who saw his glory in his transsiguration. It is good to be here; here let us make tabernacles; let these thoughts kindle in thee an earnest desire, (shall I call it a holy curiosity) to see him as he is sace to sace. His advancement is thine advantage: as the forerunner he is for me entered; let the contemplation of the joy he is entered into, and the power he is there girded with, have such an influence upon me, as that by saith I may be raised up likewise, and "made to sit to gether with him in heavenly places," Eph. ii. 6.

Sixthly, Let us fet ourselves to think of the unfearchable riches of the new covenant, made with us in lefus Christ, and sealed to us in the facraments. Peruse this covenant in the several dispensations of it, from the dawning of its day in the first promise to that noon day-light, which life and immortality are brought to by the gospel. Read over the several articles of it, and ferve how well ordered it is in all things, fo well, that it could not be better. Review its promises, which are precious and many, very many, very precious, and fure to all the feed. Search into the hidden wealth that is treasured up in them; dig into thele mines : content not thyfelf with a transient view of thefe fountains of living water, but bring thy bucket, and draw with joy out of those wells of falvation. " walk about this Zion, this city of God, tell the " towers, mark well the bulwarks, confider the palaces, er and fay, This God, who is our God in covenant, is " ours for ever and ever, he will be our guide, even " unto death," Pfal. glviii. 12, 13, 14.

Stir up thyself, therefore, O my soul, to meditate on the privileges of a justified state; the liberties and immunities, the dignities and advantages that are

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conveyed by the charter of pardon. O the blessednets of the man whose iniquities are forgiven! See him secured from the arrests of the law, the curse of God, the evil of affliction, the sting of death, and the damnation of hell. Read with pleasure the triumphs of blessed Paul, Rom. viii. 33. &c. Happy thou art, my soul, and all is well with thee, or shall be shortly, if

thy fins be pardoned.

Meditate on the honours and comforts of a state of grace. If now I am a child of God, adopted and regenerated, and have received the spirit of adoption, I have liberty of access to the throne of grace, I have a fanctified use of my creature comforts, my fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; "all is mine, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. or the world, or life, or death, or things prefent or, things to come all are mine," I Cor i. 21, 22. I have meat to eat that the world knows not of joy that a stranger doth not intermiddle with. Let thoughts of these priveleges work in thee, O my soul, a holy disdain of the pleasures of sense, and the profits of the world: whenever they come in competition with the gains of godliness, and the delights of spiritual life, offer those to them that know no better.

Seventbly, Let us fet ourselves to think of the communion of saints. This contributes something to our comfort in communion with Christ, that through him, we have sellowship one with another, 1 John 1. 7. "So "nat we being many, are one bread and one body; for Christ died to gather together, in one, the chidren of God that were scattered abroad, John xi. 52. that all might be one in him, in whom we all meet, as many members in one head, so making one body; many branches in one root, so making one vine; and many tones in one soundation, so making one building.

Enlarge thy thoughts then, O my foul, and let it

standest

standest in to the whole samily, both in heaven and earth, which is named of Jesus Christ; to think, that thou art come, in faith, hope and love, even to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. xii. 22, 23. Even these are thy brethren, and sellow servants. Rejoice in thine alliance to them, in their affection to thee, and in the prospect thou hast of being with them shortly, of being with them eternally. Here we sit down with a little handful of weak and impersect saints, and those mixed with pretenders; but we hope shortly to have a place and a name in the general assembly of the sirst-born, and to "fit down with Abraham, Isace, and Jacob, in "the kingdom of our Father," with all the saints, and none but saints, and saints made perfect, and so

to be together for ever with the Lord.

Please thyself also, O my foul, with thinking of the fpiritual communion thou hast in the acts of Christian. piety, and in the exercise of Christian charity, with all that in every place on this earth, call on the " name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and "ours," I Cor. 1. 2. Some good Christians there are, that fall within the reach of our personal communion, to whom we give the right hand of fellowship: Others within the line of our acquaintance and correfpondence; and many more whom we know not, nor have ever heard of, never faw, nor are ever likely to fee in this world; but all these are our "companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ :" Tay and we are guided by the fame rule, animated by the fame spirit, confirmed to the same image, interested in the same promises, and joined to the same great body: they and we meet daily at the same throne of grace, under the conduct of the spirit, of adoption, which teaches us all to cry, Abba Father: And they and we hope to meet shortly at the same throne of glory, under the conduct of the same Jesus, who will gather

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his elect from the four winds, and present them all together unto the Father. Christ hath prayed, that "all that believe on him may be one;" and therefore we are sure they are so, for the Father heard him always John xvii. 20, 21. Let this subject yield us some delightful thoughts here in a scattered world, and a

divided church

Eightly, Let us fet ourselves to think of the happiness of heaven. A pleasant theme this is, very improveable, and pertinent enough to an ordinance which hath so much of heaven in it. If, indeed, we have heaven in our eve, as our home and rest, and our conversation there, we cannot but have it much upon our hearts. Have we good hope, through grace, of being shortly with Christ in the heavenly paradife, where there is fulness of joy and pleasures for ever more, where we hall fee God's glory, and enjoy his love immediately, o our complete and eternal fatisfaction: Do we exped that yet a little while the vail shall be rent, the hadows of the evening shall be done away, and we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known? Are we in prospect of a crown of glory that fades not away, an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance?

Raise thy thoughts then, O my soul, to the joyful contemplation of thy glory to be revealed: Arise then, and survey this land of promise, as Abraham, Gen. xiii. 14. Go with Moses to the top Pisgah, and take a view if it by saith. Get a scripture map of that Canaan, and study it well. Think, my soul, what they see in that world, who always behold the sace of our Father, and in it see all truth and brightness, and the persection of beauty: Think what they have there, that eat of the tree of life, and the hidden manna: whose faculties are enlarged to take in the full communication of divine love and grace, and who have God himself with them as their God, Rev. xxi. 3. Think what they are doing there who dwell in God's house, and

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are still praising him, and rest not day nor night from doing it. Think of the good company that is there, thousands of thousands of blessed angels and hely souls, with whom we shall have an intimate and un-

disturbed converse in persect light and love.

Compare the present state thou art in, my foul, with that thou hopest for; and let it be a pleasure to thee to think, that whatever is here, thy grief and burden shall be there removed and done away for ever. Satan's temptations shall there no more assault thee; thine own corruptions shall there no more ensure thee; the guilt of sin, and doubts about thy spiritual state shall there no more terrify and perplex thee; no pain nor siekness, nor forrow shall be an allay to the enjoyments of that world, as they are to those of this world. All tears shall there be wiped away, even those for sin.

On the other fide, whatever is here thy delight and pleafure, shall there be perfected. The knowledge of God, joy in him, and communion with him, are here, as it were, thy running banquets; there they shall be thy continual feast. The work of grace begun in thee, is that which reconciles thee to thyself, and gives the some pleasure now in thy restections upon thyself: This work shall be there compleated, and the finishing strokes given to it by the same skil-

ful and happy hand that begun it.

Come now, my foul, and "neglect not the gift that "is in thee, but meditate upon these things, give thy." self wholly to them," I Tim. iv. 14, 15. Be thou in them, as in thy business, as in thine element. Think of the things of the invisible and unchangeable world, till thou findest thyself so affected with them as even to forget, the things that are here below, that are here behind, and look upon them with a holy negligence, that thou mayest, with great diligence, reach towards "the things that are before, and press to-"wards the mark for the high calling," Phil. iii. 13 14. We

II. We must not only meditate, but we must pray, and cry earneitly to God for affiftance and acceptance in what we do. . When the apostle had reckoned up all the parts of the Christian's armour, he concludes with this, "praying always," Eph. vi. 18. Prayer must gird on the whole armour of God; for, without prayer, all our endeavours are vain and ineffectual. Therefore, n our preparations for the Lord's supper, time must e spent, and pains taken in prayer, for two reasons; (1.) Because this is a proper means of quickening ourselves, and stirring up our graces. One duty of eligion is of use to dispose and fit us for another; and the most folemn fervices ought to be approached radually, and through the outer courts. In prayer he foul afcends to God, and converseth with him; nd thereby the mind is prepared to receive the visits his grace, and habituated to holy exercises. Even he bleffed Jefus prepared himfelf for the offering up the great facrifice by prayer, a long prayer in the buse, John xvii. and strong cryings with tears in he garden. Three times Christ was spoken to while t was here upon earth by voices from heaven, and bey all three found him praying: That at his bapim, Luke iii. 21. " Jesus being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened:" That at his transguration, Luke ix. 29. " As he prayed the fashion of his countenance was altered:" And at a little bere his passion, John xii. 27, 28. when he praying, Father glorify thy name," the voice came from caven, "I have glorified it, &c." Saul of Tarfus rays, and then fees a vision, Acts ix. 11, 12. and afrwards, Acts xxii. 17, 18. Cornelius had his vision hen he was at prayer, Acts x. 30. and Peter his, tt. 9, 10. All which instances, and many the like, ggest to us, That communion with God in prayer, repares and disposes the mind for communion with in in other duties.

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XXIV.

(2.) Because this is the appointed way for setching in that mercy and grace which God hath promised and which we stand in need of. In God is our help, and from him is our fruit sound; and he hath promised to help us, and to give us, "a new heart, to put his spirit "within us, and to cause us to walk in his statutes," Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. but it follows there, verse 37. "I will yet for all this be inquired of by the house "of Israel to do it for them." How can we expect the presence of God with us, if we do not invite him by prayer? or, the power of God upon us, if we do not by prayer derive it from him? The greatest blessings are promised to the prayer of faith; but God will not give, if we will not ask: why should he?

But what must we pray for, when we draw near to God in this solemn ordinance? Solomon tells us that both the "preparations of the heart in man, and "the answer of the tongue is from the Lord," Prov xvi. 1. To him therefore we must apply ourselves so both. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in these prayers, and in it the blessed spirit, "help "eth our infirmities, forasmuch as we know no "what to pray for," in this, or in any other case, a

we ought.

this folemnity before it comes. Whatever is necessare to qualify us for communion with God in it, is spoke of in scripture as God's gist; and whatever is the matter of God's promise, must be the matter of our proyers; for promises are given, not only to be the ground of our hope, but also to be the guide of our desire in prayer. Is knowledge necessary? "out of he mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." Prosite 6. and at wisdom's gates we must wait for wisdom gists, rejoicing herein, "that the Son of God is com" and hath given us an understanding," I John v. 2 Is faith necessary? That is not "of ourselves, it is to

the

"of God," Eph. ii. 8. Him therefore we must attend, who is both the author and the finisher of our faith. To him we must pray, Lord, increase our faith: Lord, perfect what is lacking in it : Lord fulfil the work of faith with power. Is love necessary? It is the " Holy Ghoft that sheds abroad that love in "our hearts, and circumcifeth our hearts to love the "Lord our God." To that heavenly fire we must therefore go for this holy spark, and pray for the breath of the Almighty to blow it up into a flame. Is repentance necessary? It is God that gives repentance, that takes away the stony heart and gives a heart of fielh: and we must beg of him to work that bleffed change in us: " Behold the fire and the wood," the ordmance inflituted, and all needful provision made for or facrifice: "But where is the lamb for a burnt oftring?" Where is the heart to be offered up to God? If God did not provide himfelf a lamb, the folemnity would fail, Gen. xxii. 7, 8. To him therefore we must to buy fuch things as we have need of against the feast, that is, to beg them; for we buy without money and without price: and fuch buyers shall not be driven out of God's temple, nor flighted there, however they are looked on in mens markets.

(2.) Pray, that our hearts may be enlarged in the duty. It is the gracious promife of God, that he will open rivers in the wilderness, and streams in the defart, and the joint experience of all the saints, that they looked unto him and were lightened; such outgoings of soul therefore towards God, as may receive the incomes of divine strength and comfort we should earnessly delire and pray for. Pray that God would grace his own institutions with such manifest tokens of his presence as these two disciples had, who reasoned thus for their own conviction that they had been with Jesus, "Did not our hearts burn within us?" Luke xiv. 32. Pray that by the grace of God, the business of

the ordinance may be faithfully done; the work of the day, the facrament day, in its day, according as the duty of the day requires, Ezra. iii. 4 Pray that the ends of the ordinance may be fincerely aimed at, and happily attained, and the great intentions of the inftitution of it answered; that you may not receive the grace of God therein in vain. O that my heart may be engaged to approach unto God! So engaged as that nothing may prevail to difengage it ! Come, bleffed Spirit, and breathe upon these dry bones! Move upon the waters of the ordinances, and produce a new creation: " Awake O north wind, and come thou fouth, " and blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof " may flow forth: and then, let my beloved come into " his garden, (his it is, and then it will be fit to be " called his) and eat his pleasant fruits, Cant. iv. 16.

(3.) Pray, that we may be favourably accepted of God, both in the preparation and in the performance. In vain do we worship, if God do not accept us: The applause of men is but a poor reward (such as the hypocrites were content with, and put off with) if · we come short of the favour of God: Herein therefore we should labour, this we should be ambitious of as our highest honour, the top of our preferment, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of the Lord, 2 Cor iv. 5. About this therefore, we should be very solicitous in our inquiries, "Where-" withal shall I come before the Lord," fo as to please him? For this we should be very importunate in our " prayers, "O that I knew where I might find him!" Job xxiii. 3. O that I might be met at the table of the Lord with a bleffing, and not with a breach! O that God would fmile upon me there, and bid me welcome! O that the beloved of my foul would fliew me fome token for good there, and fay unto me, I am thy falvation! "Son, daughter, be of good eheer, "thy fins are forgiven thee. Let him kifs me with

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"the kiffes of his mouth, for his love is better than "wine." O that it might be a communion indeed between Christ and my foul! That which is in vogue with the most of men is, "Who will shew us any "good?" But when I am admitted to touch the top of the golden sceptre, this is my petition, this is my request, Lord lift up the light of thy countenance upon me, and that shall put true gladness into my

heart, greater than the joy of harvest.

(4.) Pray, that what is amifs may be pardoned in the blood of Christ. This prayer good Hezekiah hath put into our mouths, God put it into our hearts! 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. " The good Lord pardon "every one that prepareth his heart in fincerity to " feek the Lord God of his fathers, and aims honeftly, "though he be not cleanfed according to the purifi-"eation of the fanctuary." We cannot but be conscious to ourselves, that in many things we come fort of our duty, and wander from it: The rule is frict it is fit it should be so, and yet no particular rule more firied than that general and fundamental law of God's kingdom, "Thou shalt love the Lord "thy God, with all thy heart, and foul, and mind, "and might:" But our own hearts know, and God, who is greater than our hearts and knows all things, knows that we do not come up to the rule, nor "continue in all things that are written in the book " of the law to do them." By our deficiences we become obnoxious to the curfe, and should perish by it if we were under the law: But we are encouraged by a penitent believing prayer to fue out our pardon, having an advocate with the Father. .

Would we take with us words in these prayers? David's psalms, and St Paul's epistles will surnish us with great variety of acceptable words: words which the Holy Ghost teacheth; and other helps of devotion which, thanks be to God, we have plenty of may be

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fir up ourselves to take hold on God, our experience shall be added to that of thousands: That Jacob's God never said to Jacob's seed, "Seek ye me in vain."

## C H A P. VII.

Directions in what Frame of Spirit we Should come to, and attend upon this Ordinance.

O make up the wedding garment, which is proper for this wedding feaft, it is requifite, not only that we have an habitual temper of mind agreeable to the gospel, but that we have such an actual disposition of spirit, as is consonant to the nature and intentions of the Or Ginance. The Is an Cac the feripture-directory of religious worship, Eccl. v. 1. "Keep thy foot when thou goeft to the house of God, " (that is) Keep thy heart with all diligence," Prov. iv. 23. Look well to the motions of thy foul, and obferve the fleps it takes. When we are to fee the goings of our God, our King in the fanctuary, Plal lxviii. 24. It concerns us to fee our own goings, "Keep thy foot," that is, do nothing rashly; but, "when thou goeff to eat with a ruler, confider dili-"gently what is before thee," Prov. xxiii. 1. It was not enough for the priefts under the law that they were washed and dressed in their priestly garments when they were first confecrated, but they must be carefully washed and dressed every time they went in to minister, else they went in at their peril: We are spiritual priests to our God, and must do the office of our priest-hood with a due decorum, remembering that this is that which the Lord hath faid, God by his grace speak it home to our hearts! "I will be fanctified in them that come nigh me;" that is, I will be at tended

This is a time to fummon the attendance of all the thoughts, and keep them close to the business we are going about. Suffer none to wander, none to trifle; for here is employment, good employment for them all, and all little enough. Though a perfect fixation of thought without any distractions during the folemnity, is what I believe none can attain to in this state of imperfection; yet it is what we should defire and aim at, and come to as near as we can. Let us charge our thoughts not to straggle, keep a watchful eye upon them, and call them back when they begin to rove. keep them in full employment about that which is proper and pertinent, which will prevent the flarting fide to that which is otherwise, Come, " bind the sa-"crifice with cords to the horns of the altar," that it may not be to feek when it should be facrificed, Pfal. zviii. 27. Be able to fay through grace, "O God, my heart is fixed;" though unfixed at other times. yet fixed now. Look up to God for grace to establish the heart and keep it fleady: Look with forrow and fhame upon its wanderings: Shut the door against distractions: Watch and pray against the temptation: and when those birds of prey come down upon the facrifices, do as Abraham did, Gen. xv. II. "Drive them away." And, while you fincerely endeavour to keep your hearts fixed, be not discouraged; the vain thoughts that are difallowed, striven against. and repented of, though they are our hindrance yet they shall not be our ruin.

"Secondly, Let us address ourselves to this service, with an evenness and calmness of affection, free from the disorders and russes of passion. A sedate and quiet spirit; not tossed with the tempests of care and sear, but devolving care on God, and silenting sear with saith; not sinking under the load of temporal burdens, but supporting itself with the hopes of eternal joys: easy itself, because submissive to its God; this is the

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fpirit fit to receive and return divine visits. They were still waters, on the sace of which the spirit moved to produce the world: The Lord was not in the wind, "was not in the earthquake." The prince of the power of the air raised storms, for "he loves to sish in "troubled waters:" But the Prince of peace still storms, and quiets the winds and waves; for he casts his net into a calm sea: "The waters of Shiloah run "fostly, and without noise," Isa. viii. 6. And that "river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our "God, is none of those, the waters whereof rore and "are troubled," Psal. xlvi. 3, 4.

Let us therefore always study to be quiet: and however we are crossed and disappointed, "let no "our hearts be troubled, let them not be cast down and disquieted within us." Let us not create or as gravate our own vexations, nor be put into a disorder by any thing that occurs; but let the peace of God always rule in our hearts, and then that peace will keep them. They whose natural temper is either fretful or searful, have the more need to double their guard; and, when any dissurbance begins in the soul should give diligence to suppress the tumult with also speed, less the Holy Spirit be thereby provoked to withdraw, and then they will have but uncomfortable facraments.

But especially, let us compose ourselves, when we approach to the table of the Lord. Charge the peace then in the name of the King of kings; command silence when you expect to hear the voice of joy and gladness: Stop the mouth of clamourous and noily passions, banish tumultuous thoughts, "fuffer not those "evil spirits to speak," but expel them; and let your souls return to God, and repose in him as their relations which requires the greatest calmness and serenity possible. Let all intemperate hearts be cooled, and the thoughts

tended as a holy God, in a holy manner, " and fo be-"fore all the people I will be glorified,' Lev. x. 3. We then fanclify God in holy duties, when we fanclify ourselves in our approaches to them . that is, when we seperate ourselves from every thing that is common or unclean, "from all filthiness both of flesh and "fpirit," and confecrate ourselves to God's glory as our end, and to his fervice as our business. If we would have the ordinance fan lified to us for our comfort and benefit, we must thus fanctify ourselves for it. Ioshua's command to the people, when they were to follow the ark of the covenant through Jordan, should be still founding in our ears the night before a facrament, Josh. iii. 5. "Sanctify yourselves for to-morrow "the Lord will do wonders among you." When the God of glory admits fuch dunghill worms, fuch a generation of vipers, as we are, into covenant and communion with himself; when he gives gifts, such gifts, even to the rebellious; when by the power of his grace-he fanclifies the finful, and comforts the forrowful, and gives fuch holiness and joy as his life from the dead: furely then he does wonders among us. That we may fee these wonders done, and share in the benefit of them, that we may experience them done in our fouls, "Jordan driven back at the prefence of the "Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob," to open a passage for us into the heavenly Canaan; let us fanctify ourselves and earnestly pray to God to fanctify

For our help herein, the following directions per-

haps may be of fome ufe.

First, Let us address ourselves to this service with a fixedness of thought. There is scarce any instance of the corruption of nature, and the moral impotence which by sin we are brought under, more complained of by serious Christians than the vanity of the thoughts, and the difficulty of fixing them to that which is good.

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They are apt to wander after a thousand impertinences, it is no easy matter to gather them in, and keep them employed as they should be; we all find it so by sad experience. "Vain thoughts lodge within us," and are most a hinderance and disturbance to us when good thoughts are invited into the soul, and should be entertained there. When therefore we apply ourselves to a religious service, which will find work for all our thoughts, and which presents objects well worthy of our closest contemplation, we are concerned to take pains with ourselves to get ourselves engaged, and to "bring every thought into obedience to the law of

" this folemnity."

This is a time to fet aside the thoughts of every thing that is foreign and unfeafonable; and all thole foolish speculations which use to be the unprofitable s musement of our idle hours, and the sports and pasttimes of our carnal minds; away with them all: clear the court of those vagrants, when the doors are to be opened for the King of glory to come in. Are they thoughts that pretend bufiness, and are as buyers and tellers in the temple?' Tell them you have other builness to mind; bid them depart for this time, and at a more convenient feafon you will call for them. Do they pretend urgent bufinels, as Nehemiah's enemies did when they fought to give him a diversion? Give them the repulse that he gave, and like him repeat it as oft as they repeat their folicitations, Neh. vi. 2, 3, 4. " I am doing a great work, why fhould the work "ceale, while I leave it and come down to you?" Do they pretend friendship, and fend in the name of thy mother and thy brethren standing without, to speak with thee? Yet dismiss them as Christ did, by giving the preference to better friends: Let not thoughts of those we love best, divert'us from thinking of Christ whom we know we must love better. This

thoughts of that which hath made an uproar in the foul he banished, and let a frict charge be given to all whout you, to all within you, "by the roes and the "hinds of the field," those innocent and pleasant creatures, that they flir not up, nor awake your love, nor give any disturbance to your communion with him.

Thirdly, Let us address ourselves to it with a holy awe and reverence of the divine Majesty. We ought to be in the fear of the Lord every day, and all the day long; for he is our first observer wherever we ere, and will be the judge of perfons and actions, by whole unerring fentence our eternal flate will be detided; but, in a special manner, he is " greatly to be leared in the affemblies of his faints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him," Pfal. xxix. 7. and the nearer we approach to him, the ore reverent we should be. Angele that always beold God's face, fee canfe to cover their own. Even then when we are admitted to fit down at God's table, we mult remember that we are worshipping at his hothool, and therefore must lay outselves very low before him, and "in his fear worthip towards his holy "temple," Pfal, v. 7. Let us not rush into the prefence of God in a Pareless manner, as if he were a man like ourselves: nay, so as we would not approach to a prince or a great man; but observe a decorum, "giving to him the glory due unto his name," and taking to ourselves the shame due to ours. If he be a Master, where is his fear? We do not worship God acceptably, if we do not worship him "with reverence and godly fear," Heb. xii. 28.

(1.) We must worship him with reverence, as a storious God, a God of infinite persection, and almighty power, who "covers himself with light as with a "garment," and yet, as to us, makes darkness his pavilion. Dare we profane the temples of the Holy Chost, by outward indencencies of carriage and be-

haviour,

haviour, the manifest indications of a vain and regard less mind? Dare we allow of flat and common thought of that God who is over all bleffed for evermore? Se him, my foul, fee him by faith upon a throne, high and lifted up: not only upon a throne of grace, which encourages thee to come with boldness, but upon throne of glory, and a throne of government, which obliges thee to come with caution. Remember that "God is in heaven, and thou art upon earth; and "therefore, let thy words be few," Eccl. v. 2. "B " still, and know that he is God," that he is great and keep thy distance. Let an awful regard to the glories of the eternal God, and the exalted Redeemen make thee humble and ferious, very ferious, very hum ble in thine approach to this ordinance, and keep the fo during thee folemnity.

(2.) We must also worship him with godly sear, a holy God, a God whose name is jealous, and who a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29. We have reason to sear before him, for we have offended him, and have made ourselves obnoxious to his wrath and curse and we are but upon our good behaviour, as probationers for his savour. He is not a God that will be mocked, that will be trifled with; If we think to put a cheat upon him, we shall prove in the end to have put the most dangerous cheat upon our own sould in this act of religion, therefore, as well as in others we "must work out our salvation with sear an "trembling."

Fourtbly, Let us come to this ordinance with holy jealoufy over ourfelves, and a humble fense our own unworthiness. We must sit before the Lor in such a frame as David composed himself into, whe he suid, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is m father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? 2 Sam. vii. 18. Nothing prepareth the soul more so

spiritual comforts than humility doth.

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(1.) It may be, we have reason to suspect ourselves talf we come unworthly. Though we must not chein fuch suspicions of our state as will damp our joy God, and discourage our hope in Christ, and fill us th amazement; nor fuch as will take off our chaot wheels, and keep us standing at a gaze when we ould be going forward; yet we must maintain such a aloufy over ourselves, as will keep us humble, and ake us off from all felf-conceit and felf-confidence; ch a jealoufly of ourfelves, as will keep us watchand fave us from finking into carnal fecurity. nd now is a proper time to think how many there e that eat bread with Christ, and yet lift up the el against him: The hand of him that betrayeth m perhaps is with him upon the table: which should tus upon asking, as the disciples did, just before the f facrament, "Lord is it I?" Matth. xxvi. 22. my that eat and drink in Christ's presence, will be ected and disowned by him in the great day: we I not some reason to fear, lest that be my doom last? To fear, lest a promise being lest me of enring into rest, I should seem to come short? To fear, , when the King comes to fee the guests, he find without a wedding-garment: Be not too confident, my foul, lest thou deceive thyself: "Be not highminded, but fear,"

(2.) However, it is certain we have reason to abase releves: for at the best, we are unworthy to come. we are "less than the least of God's mercies," how we have less are we than the greatest, than this, which cludes all? We are unworthy of the crumbs that Il from our Master's table, much more unworthy of techildren's bread, and the dainties that are upon table. Being invited, we may hope to be welcome; the what is there in us that we should be invited: the invite their friends and acquaintance to their bles, but we are naturally "strangers and enemies

" in our mind by wieked works," and yet are we in vited : Men invite fuch as they think will, with their quality or merit, grace their tables; but we are more likely to be a reproach to Christ's table; being soon and maimed, halt and blind, and yet are picked up out of the high ways and the hedges, Luke, xiv. 24. Men invite fuch as they are under obligations to of have expectations from; but Christ is no way in debted to us, nor can he be benefited by us; lour goodness extends not to him, and yet he invites us. We have much more reason than Mephibosheth had, when he was made a constant guest at David's table, to box ourselves, and fay, "What is this servant, that thou shoulds look upon fuch a dead dog as I am?" 2 Sam. ix 8. They who thus humble themselve field be exalted.

Fifthly Yet let us come to this ordinance with gracious confidence, as children to a father, to a fa ther's table: not with any confidence in ourfelves, but in Christ only. That flavish fear, which represent God as a hard mafter, rigorous in his demands, and extreme to mark what we do amifs; which straitens our fpirits, and subjects us to bondage and torment must be put off, and friven against : and we must come boldly to the throne of grace, to the table of grace not as having any thing in ourfelves to recommend us not as having a high Prieft, who is touched with the fealing of our infirmities, Heb. iv. 15, 16. As a pro fumptious rudeness, is a provocation to the mafter the feeft, fo a distrustful shyness is displeasing to him which looks as if we questioned either the fincerity of the invitation, or the fufficiency of the provision.

This is the fault of many good Christians: the come to the facrament rather like prisoners to the bar, than like friends and children to the table; the come trembling and altonished, and full of confusion. Their apprehensions of the granduer of the ordinance and the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of the coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of the coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of the coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of the coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of the coming unworthly, run into an extended the danger of the coming unworthly the danger of the dang

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reme, and become a hinderance to the exercise of hith, hope, and love: this extreme we should carefully watch against, because it tends so much to God's dishonour, our own prejudice, and the discouragement of others. Let us remember we have to do with one who is willing to make the best of sincere desires, and ferious endeavours, though in many things we be defedive: and who deals with us in tender mercy, and not in first justice, and who though he be out of Christ a confuming fire, yet in Christ is a gracious Father: let us therefore draw near with a true heart, and in full affurance of faith, Heb. x. 22. It is related of Titus the emperor, that when a poor petitioner prefented his address to him with a trembling hand, he was much displeased, and asked him, Dost thou prefent thy petition to thy prince, as if thou were giving meat to a lion! Chide thyself for these amazing sears: Why art thou cast down, O my foul? and why art "thou disquieted within me?" If the spirit undertake to work all my works in me, as the Son hath undertaken to work all my works for me, both the one and the other shall be done effectually; therefore " hope "thou in God; for I shall yet praise him."

Sixthly, Let us come to this ordinance with earnest defire towards God, and communion with him. It is a feast, a spiritual feast; and we must come to it with an appetite, a spiritual appetite: for the full foul bathes even the honey-comb, and flights the offer of it; but to the hungry foul, that is fensible of its own needs, every bitter thing is fweet, even the bitternefs of repentance, when it is in order to peace and pardon. Our defires towards the world and the flesh must be ehecked and moderated, and kept under the government of religion and right reason: for we have been too long spending our money for that which is is not bread, and which is at the best unfatisfying ; but our defires towards Christ must be quickened and M flirring.

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flirring. " As the hart, the hunted hart, panteth after the refreshment of the water brook, so earnestly " must our fouls pant for the living God," Pfal. alii. The invitation is given, and the promise made to them only that hunger and thirst; they are called to come to the waters, Ifa. lv. I. to come and drink John vii. 37. and it is promifed to them that they shall be filled, Matth. v. 6. It is necessary, therefore, that we work upon our hearts the confideration of those things that are proper to kindle this holy fire, and to blow up its fparks into a flame. We are then best prepared to receive temporal mercies, when we are most indifferent to them, and content, if the will of God be fo, to be without them. "Did I defire a fon of my Lord?" faid the good Shunamite, 2 Kings iv. 28. Here the danger is of being too earnest in our desires, as Rechael, "Give me children or else I die." But we an then best prepared to receive spiritual mereies, when we are most importunate for them : Here the defire cannot be too vehement. In the former case, firong defires evidence the prevalency of fense; but in this, they evidence the power of faith, both realizing and valuing the bleffings defired. The devout and pious foul thirsts for God, for the living God, as a thirsty land, Pfal. exliii. 6 .- lxiii. 1. It longs, yea even faints for the courts of the Lord, and for communion with God in them, Pfal. lxxxiv. 2. It "breaks for the " longing it hath unto God's judgments at all times," Pfal. exix. 20. Can our fouls witness to fuch defires as thefe? O that I might have a more intimate acquaintance with God and Christ, and divine things O'that I might have the tokens of God's favour, and fuller affurances of his diftinguishing love in Jefus Christ ? O that my covenant interest in him, and rela tion to him, might be cleared up to me, and that might have more of the comfort of it! O that I might partake more of the divine grace; and, by its effectus working

working on my foul, might be made more conformable to the divine will and likeness; more holy, humble spiritual, heavenly, and more meet for the inheritance? O that I might have the earnest of the Spirit in my heart, sealing me to the day of redemption to the day.

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Thus the defire of our fouls must be towards the Lord, and towards the remembrance of his name. In this imperfect state, where we are at home in the body, and absent from the Lord, our love to God acts more in holy defires, than in holy delights. It is rather love in motion, like a bird upon the wing, than love at rest, like a bird upon the nest, Pfal. Ixxxiv. 3. All those who have the Lord for their God, agree to defire nothing more than God, for they know they have enough in him; but yet fill they defire more and more of God; for, till they come to heaven, they will never have enough of him. Come then, my foul, why art thou fo cold in thy defires towards those things which are defigned for thy peculiar fatisfaction, diftind from the body? Why fo eager for the meat that perisheth, and fo indifferent to that which endures to everlasting life? Hast thou no desire to that which is to necessary to thy support, and without which thou art undone? No defire to that which will contribute fo much to thy profit, and yield thee an expressible fatisfaction? Provision is made in the Lord's Supper of bread to firengthen thee, will not the fense of thine own weakness and emtiness make thee hunger ther that? Canst thou be indifferent to that which is the flaff of thy life? Provision is made of pleasant food, fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees; ert thou not desirous of dainties, such dainties? Was the tree of knowledge fuch a temptation, because it was " pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be defired to "make one wife," that our first parents would break through the hedge of a divine command, and venture Il that was dear to them to come at it? And, shall not M 2 the

the tree of life, which we are not only allowed, but commanded to eat of, and the fruit of which will neurish us to life eternal; shall not that appear more pleasant in our eyes, and to more be desired? God, even own God, who hath wherewithal to supply all thy needs, and hath promised to be to thee a God all-sussicient, a God, that is enough, he hath said it, Psallxxxi. 10. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it"

Thou art not straitened in him, be not straitened in thine own desires.

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Seventily, Let us come to this ordinance with raised expectations. The same faith that enlargeth the desire, and draws out that to a holy vehemenee, should also elevate the hope, and ripen that to a holy considence. When we come thirsting to these waters we need not sear that they will prove like the brooks in summer, which disappoint the weary traveller; so, "when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place," Job. vi. 15. &c. Such are all the broken cisterns of the creature, they perform not what they promise, or rather what we soolishly promise to ourselves from them: no, but these are inexhaustible sountains of living waters, in which there is enough for all, though never so many; enough for each, though never so needy; enough for me, though most unworthy.

Come, my foul, what dost thou look for at the table of the Lord? The Maker of the feast is God himself, who doth nothing little nor mean, but is "able to do "exceeding abundantly above what we are able to ask or think." When he gives, he gives like himself, gives like a king, gives like a God, all things richly to enjoy; considering not what becomes such ungrateful wretches as we are to receive, but what it becomes such a bountiful benefactor as he is to give. A lively saith may expect that which is rich, and great from him that is possessor of heaven and earth, and all the wealth of both; and that which is kind and gracious from

from him that is the "Father of mercies, and the God of all confolation." A lively faith may expect at that is purchased by the blood of Christ from a God who is righteous in all his ways, and all that is promised in the new covenant from a God who cannot lie nor deceive.

The provision in this feast is Christ himself, and all his benefits; all we need to save us from being miserable, and all we can desire to make us happy: and glorious things, no doubt, may be expected with him, in whom "it pleased the Father, that all sulness "should dwell." Let our expectations be built upon a right foundation; not any merit of our own, but God's mercy, and Christ's mediation: and then build large, as large as the new covenant in its utmost extent: build high, as high as heaven in all its glory. Come expecting to see that which is most illustrious, and to taste and receive that which is most illustrious, and to taste mid receive that which you will be abundantly satisfied.

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Though what is prepared feems to a carnal eve poor and feanty, like the five loaves fet before five thousand men; yet, when Christ hath the breaking of those loaves, they shall all eat and be filled. In this ordinance, the oil is multiplied, the oil of gladness; it is multiplied, in the powering out, as the widow's oil 2 Kings iv. 2. &c. Do as the did therefore, bring empty veffels, bring not a few, they shall all be filled? the expectations of faith shall all be answered; the oil hays not, as there verse 6. while there is an empty veffel waiting to be filled: Give faith and hope their full compass, and thou wilt find, as that widow did. veric 7. there is enough of this oil, this multiplied oil. this oil from the good olive, to pay thy debt, and mough befide for thee and thine to live upon. As we of wrong ourselves by expecting to much from the world, which is vanity and vexation; fo we often frong ourselves by expecting too little from God, M 3 whofe

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whose "mercy is upon us, according as we hope in "him," and who, in exerting his power, and conferring his gifts, still saith, "According to your saith, "be it unto you." The king of Israel lost his advantage against the Syrians, by "smitting thrice, and "then staying, when he should have smitten five or six "times," 2 Kings xiii. 18, 19. And we do often in like manner prejudice ourselves by the weakness of our saith; we receive little, because we expect little; and are like them among whom "Christ could not do "many mighty works, because of their unbelies," Mark vi. 5.

Eightly, Let us come to this ordinance with rejoicing and thankfgiving. These two must go together; for whatever is the matter of our rejoicing, must be the matter of our thankfgiving. Holy joy is the hear of our thankful praise, and thankful praise the language of holy joy; and both these are very seasonable when we are coming to an ordinance, which is instituted both for the honour of the Redeemer, and for

the comfort of the redeemed.

Beside the matter for joy and praise which we are furnished with in our attendance on the ordinance, even our approach to it is fuch an honour, fuch a fayour as obligeth us to " come before his prefence with finging, and even to enter into his gates with " thankigiving," Pfal: c. 2. 4. " With gladness and rejoicing shall the royal bride be brought," Pfal xlv. 15. Those that in their preparations for the ordinance have been " fowing in tears, may not only " come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves, "with them," but go with rejoicing to fetch their theaves, to meet the ark, " lifting up their heads with " joy, knowing that their redemption" and the fealing of them to the day of redemption, draws nigh. Le those that are of a forrowful fpirit hearken to this sheer up and be comforted: " This day is hely unto the " Lord

"Lord your God, mourn not, nor weep, Neh. viii. 9.
"It is the day that the Lord hath made, and we must rejoice and be glad in it:" and the joy of the Lord will be our strength, and oil to our wheels. All things considered, thou hast a great deal more reason than Haman had, "to go in merrily with the king, to the banquet of wine," Esther v. 4.

Two things may justly be matter of our rejoicing and thanksgiving in our approach to this ordinance:

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(1.) That God hath put fuch a price as this in our hands to get wisdom: that such an ordinance as this was instituted for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace: that it is transmitted down to us, is adminifired among us, and we are invited to it. This is a token for good, which we have reason to rejoice in. and be very thankful for, that our lot is not cast either among those that are firangers to the gospel, and so have not this ordinance at all, or among those that are memies to the gospel, and have it wretchedly corrupted, and turned into an idolatrous fervice; but that wisdom's table is spread among us, and her voice heard in our streets, and we are called to her feasts, we have a nail in God's holy place, a fettlement in his house. and stated opportunities of communion with him, "If "the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not "have thewed us fuch things as these." O what a privilege is it thus to eat and drink in Christ's presence! to fit down under his shadow at his table with his friends and favourites! that we, who deferved to have been fet with the dogs of his flock, should be fet with the children of his family, and eat of the children's bread! Nay, that we should be numbered among his priests, and eat of of the dedicate things to Bloss the " joy, knowing that their redemp? Juod ym O Lord."

(2.) That God hath given us a heart to the price mour hands. We have reason to be thankful that he that not only invited us to this feast, which is a token

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of his good-will towards us; but that he hath inclined us to accept the invitation, which is the effect of a good work upon us. Many that are called make light of it, and go their way to their farms and merchandize; and, if we had been left to ourselves, we should have made the same foolish choice, and, in the greatness of our folly, should have gone astray, and wandered endlessy. It was free grace that made us willing in the day of power, and graciously compelled us to come in to the gospel-seast: it was distinguishing grace that revealed to us babes, the things that were hid from the wife and prudent: let that grace have the glory, and let us have the joy of this blessed work.

Nintbly, Let us come to this ordinance in charity with all men, and with a fincere affection to all good Christians. It is a love-feast, and if we do not comin love, we come without the wedding garment, and forfeit the comforts of the feast. This is to be ferroully thought of, when we bring our gift to the altar

as we hope for acceptance there. 2401 400 bas dies

When we come to the facrament, we must bring with us ill-will to none, good-will to all, but especially

to them who are of the houshold of faith.

(1.) We must bear ill-will to none; no, not to those that have been most injurious and provoking to us: though they have affronted us never so much in our honour, wronged us in our interest, and set thems selves to vilify us, and do us mischief, yet we must not hate them, nor entertain any malice towards them; we must not be desirous or studious of revenge, to seek-their hurt in any respect, but must from our heart sorgive them, as we ourselves are, and hope to be forgiven of God. We must see to it, that there be not the least degree of enmity to any person in the world lodged in our breast, but carefully purge out all that old leaven; not only lay aside the thoughts of it for the present, but wholly pluck up, and cast out that

not of bitterness, "which bears gall and wormwood." here hands must, in this ordinance, as well as in praver, be " lifted up without wrath and doubting," Tim. ii. 8. How can we expect that God should be reconciled to us, if we bring not with us a disposition be reconciled to our brethren; for our trespasses aminst God are unspeakably greater than the worst of our brethren's trespasses against us. O that each would apply this caution to themselves! You have a neighbour, that, upon some disgust conceived, you cannot find in your hearts to fpeak to, nor to fpeak well of; some one, that you have entertained a prejudice gainst, and would willingly do an ill turn to, if it lay your power; fome one, whom it may be you are mady to fay, you cannot endure the fight of: And, are you retain fuch a spirit when you come to this rdinance? Can you conceal it from God? Or, do ou think you can justify it at his bar, and make it out hat you do well to be angry? Let the fear of God's rath, and the hope of Christ's love, reduce you to a letter temper; and when you celebrate the memorial of the dying of the Lord Jesus be fure you remember this, that he is our peace, and that he died to flay all mmities.

(2.) We must bear good-will to all, with a particular affection to all good Christians. Christian charity oth not only forbid that which is any way injurious, but it requires that which is kind and friendly.

The desire of our hearts must be towards the wellare of all. If we be indeed solicitous about the salvation of our own souls, we cannot but have a tender concern for the souls of others, and be hearty wellmissers to their salvation likewise, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved," I Tim. ii. 3, 4. True grace hates monopolies. We must thus love those whose wickedness we are bound to hate; and earnefly defire their happiness, even while we indus

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triously decline their fellowship.

But the "delight of our fouls must be in the faints "that are on the earth, those excellent ones;" as David was, Pfal xvi 4. They are " precious in God's " fight, and honourable, and they should be so in ours; they have fellowship with the Father, and with "his Son Jefus Chrift," and therefore, by a fincere and affectionate love to them, we also should have fell lowship with them. Our hearts will then be comforted when they are knit together in love, Col. ii. 2. This love must not be confined to those of our own commun nion, our own way and denomination: then we love them for our own fakes, because they credit us; no for Christ's fake, because they honour him: but fine God is no respecter of persons, we must not be such In every nation, he that fears God, and works right outness is accepted of him, and should be so of us Acts x 34, 35. Doubtless there may be a diversity of apprehensions in the less weighty matters of the law fuch as the distinction of meats and days, and di verfity of practice accordingly, and yet a fincerity of mutual love, according to the law of Christ. Those who think it is not possible, should be content to speal for themselves only, and must believe there are those who have much fatisfaction in being able to fay, that they love the image of Christ wherever they fee it and highly value a good man, though not in every thing of their mind. He that easteth out devils it Christ name must be dear to us, though he follow no us, Mark ix. 38. The differences that are amon Christians; though fomented by the malice of Satan for the ruin of love, are permitted by the wildom of God for the trial of love, that they which are perfect therein may be made manifest. Herein a Christian commendeth his love, when he loves those who diffe from him, and joins in affection to those with whomh canno

annot concur in opinion: this is thank worthy. The lingdom of God is not meat and drink; they that have miled of the bread of life, and the water of life, know not; but it is "righteoulness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: he therefore that in these things ferveth Christ, is acceptable to God i" and therefore. hough he esteem not our days, though he relishes not ur meats, he should be acceptable and dear to us. Let us then, in our approach to this facrament, flir ourselves to holy love, love without dissimulation; tus bear those on our hearts, whom the great high friest of our profession bears on his, and, as we are taught of God to love one another, let us increase therein more and more," 1 Theff. iv. o, 10. Christ aving loved us, is a good reafon why we should love in: Christ having loved our brethren alfo, is a good afon why we should love them. "Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for Christians to be kindly affectionated one towards unother," of one art, and of one foul! there the Lord commands the tiling, and gives carnest of the joys of that world. here love is perfected and reigns eternally. Transaction with the contraction and the contraction

## C H A P. VIII.

me Account of the affecting Sights that are to be feen by Faith in this Ordinance.

PARE being taken, by the grace of God, to compose ourselves into a serious frame of spirit greeable to the ordinance, we must next apply ourdies to that which is the proper business of it, that temay do the work of the day in its day, of the hour tits hour. And the sirst thing to be done is to conimplate that which is represented to us, and set bewe us there. This David aimed at when he coveted to dwell in the honse of the Lord all the days of his life, that he might behold the heauty of the Lord Psal xxvii. 4 might see his power and his glory, Psal xxvii. 4 might see his power and his glory, Psal xiii. 2. To the natural man, who receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, there appears in it nothing supprising, nothing affecting, no form nor comlines but to that saith, which is the "substance and end dence of things not seen, there appears a great sight which like Moses." Exod, iii. 3, it will with a hold reverence, turn aside now to see. As, therefore, if our preparation for this ordinance, we should provide the wonderous things of the law and gospel." If we should, with Abraham, Gen. xv. 14. "lift up on every now and look:"

When the Lamb that had been flain had taken the book, and was going to open the feals, St John, whad the honour to be a witness in vision of the fold nity, was loadly called, by one of the four live creatures, to come and see, Rev. vi. 1, 3, 5, 7. It same is the call given to us when in this facrame there is a door opened in heaven, and we are bidden.

to come up hither, Rev. iv. 1.

First, In general, we are here called to see a Lamb that had been slain opening the seals. This the general idea we are to have of the ordinance. We would have thought ourselves highly savoured indea and beloved disciples, if we had seen it in vision, John did; behold we are all invited to see it in all

cramental representation.

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(1.) In this ordinance is shewed the Lamb as it a been slain. John the Baptist pointed to him ast Lamb of God, and called upon his followers to been him, John i. 20. A Lamb designed for sacrifice order to the taking away of the sins of the world harmless, spotless Lamb: but John the divine go surther, and sees him a Lamb slain, now sacrificed

in the outer court; and not only so, but appearing in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and of the elders," as if he were newly slain, bleeding ascell, and yet alive, and "lives for evermore," lev. v. 6.—i. 18. constantly presenting his facrisce within the vail. The blood of the Lamb always flowing, that it may still be sprinkled on our consciences, to purify and pacify them, and may still speak in heaven for us, in that prevailing intercession which the Lord Jesus ever lives to make there in the virtue of his satisfaction.

In this ordinance the Lord's death is shewed forth;

In this ordinance the Lord's death is shewed forth; it is shewed forth to us, that it may be shewed forth by us. Jelus Christ is here "evidently set forth cruci"fied among us," Gal. iii. I. that we may "all with open sace behold, as in a glass, the glory of God, in the sace of Christ." Thus, as Christ "was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," in the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, and the application of his merits to the faints that lived ten: so he will be the Lamb slain to the end of the world, in the word and sacraments of the New Testament, and the application of his merits to the faints that are now, and shall be in every age. Still he is ten as a Lamb that had been slain; for this sacrifice to the not, like the Old Testament-sacrifices, decay and that old.

This is the light, the great fight we are here to fee the bush burning, and yet not confused; for the Lord is in it, his people's God and Saviour. The wounds of this Lamb are here open before us: Come see in thrist's hands the very print of the nails, see in his see the very marks of the spear. Behold him in his gony, sweating as if it had been "great drops of blood falling to the ground;" then accommodating himself to the work he had undertaken: couching between the burdens, and bowing his shoulder to bear them.

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Behold him "in his bonds, when the breath of our "moffrits, the snointed of the Lord, was taken in se their pits," and he was bound that we might go out free. Behold him at the ban prefecuted and condemned as a criminal, because he was made fin for us, and had undertaken to answer for our mildemeanours. Behold him upon the crofs, enduring the pain, and despiting the shame of the curied tree. Here is his body broken, his blood flied, his foul poured out unto death; all his sufferings, with all their aggravations, are here, in fuch a manner as the divine Wildom faw fit, by an indinuted ordinance, represented to us, and fet before us, (a.) In this ordinance is showed us the Lamb that was flain; opening the feals of the everlasting gospel: not only discovering to us the glories of the divine light, but despending to us the graces of the divine love; opening the feals of the fountain of life, which had been long as a fpring flut up; and rolling away the flone, that from thence we may draw water with joy; opening the feals of the book of life, that things hid from ages and generations might be manifelted unto us, and we might know the things which are freely given us of God's opening the scale of God's treasures, "the been fested up for ever from us, if he had not found out a way to lapply and enrich us out of them; openg the feals of heaven's gates which had been thut and fealed against us, and confecrating for us "a new and " living way into the holiest by his own blood," This is a glorious fight, and that what campot but raife our par fight given us in this ordinance; but when we view this accurately, we shall find there is that in it which " eye hath not seen por ear heard."

Secondly, In particular we are here called to fee

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many other things which we may infer from this general representation of the fufferings of Christ. It is a

very fruitful fubject, and that which will lead us to the confideration of diverse things very profitable. When we come to this facrament, we should ask ourfelves the question, which Christ put to those that had cen John's hearers, "What went ye out for to fee? What do we come to the Lord's table to feed We come to fee that which, if God gives us the eye of with to differn, it will be very affecting. Let this voice therefore, be fill founding in our cars, " Come " and fee." way lunt and should book of.

1/2; Come and fee the evil of fin. This we are concerned to fee, that we may be truly humbled for our fins palt, and may be firmly engaged by refolution and hely watchindness against fin for the future. It was for our transgreffions that Christ was thus wounded, for our mirruities that he was briffed : "Know therefore, "O my foul, and fee, that it is an evil thing, and but-"ter, that thou half forfaken the Lord thy God, and "that my fear is not in thee, faith the Lord God of "holts," Jer. ii. 19. That was a great provocation to God, which notling would atone for but such a fatrifice; a dangerous difeate to us, which not ingwood heal but fuch a medicine. "This is the wickedness, "because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine "heart," Jer. iv. 18. Here fin appears fin, and by the crofs of Christ, as

well as by the command of God, it becomes exceeding fold, Rom. vit. 13. The malignity of its pature was very great, and more than we can conceive or esrefs; for in had made fuch a breach between God and man, as none less than he who was both God and man could repair; none less than he durst undertake to be made fin for us, to become furery for that debt, and intercellor for fuch offenders. It "was impossible that "the blood of bulls and goats should take away fint" the flain was too deep to be washed out so, "Sacrifice " and offering God did not defire," would not accept

is sufficient to purge us from it; no, the Son of God himself mult come to " put away fin by the facrifice of "himfelf," or it will for ever seperate between us and Control votes to elect on to one entental

Here fin appears death, and in the cross of Christ, thews itself exceeding hurtful. Behold, my foul, and fee what mischief sin makes, by observing how dear it con the Redeemer, when he undertook to fatisfy for it; how he sweat and grouned, bled and died, when the "Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all," Look on fin through this glass, and it will appear in its true colour, black and bloody? nothing can be more for The fatal confequences of fin are feen more in the fulferings of Christ than in all the calamities that it has brought upon the world of mankind. O what a pain. ful, what a fhameful thing is fin, which put the Lord lefus to so much pain, to fo much shame, then, when he bore our " fins in his own body upon thee tree."

See this, my foul, with application: it was thy fin, thy own iniquity, that lay fo heavy upon the Lord Jefus, when he cried out, " My foul is exceeding for " rowful even unto death." It was thy pride and palfion, thy worldliness and uncleanness, the carnal mind in thee, which is enmity against God, that crowned him with thorns, and nailed him to the crofs, and laid him for a time under the fense of God's withdrawing from him. Is this fo? And shall I ever again make a mock at fin? ever again make a light matter of that which Christ made fo great a matter of? God forbid! "Is it a small thing to weary men, but have I by my "fin wearied my God alfo?" Ifa. vil. 13. "Have I " made him thus to ferve, thus to fuffer by my fins?" Ma. xliii. 24. and shall I ever be reconciled to fin a gain? or, shall I ever think a favourable thought of it any more? No, by the grace of God, I never will. The earnal pleafure, and worldly profit that fin can promise me, will never balance the pain and shame that it put my Redeemer to.

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Meditate revenge, my foul, a holy revenge, fuch a revenge as will be no breach of the law of charity; fuch a revenge as is one of the fruits of goldy forrow 2 Cor, vii. 11. If fin was the death of Christ, why should not I be the death of sin? When David lamented Saul and Jonathan, who were flain by the archers of the Philistines, I Sam. xxxi, 3. it is said, 2 Sam. i. 18. "He taught the children of Judah the " use of the bow," that they might avenge the death of their princes upon their enemies. Let us thence receive instruction: Did sin, did my sin crucity Christ? and shall not I crucify it? If it be asked, Why, what evil has it done; fay, it cost the blood of the Sen of God to expiate it; and therefore, cry out so much the more, "Crucify it, crucify it." And thus all that are Christ's, have in some measure crucified the flesh,. Gal. v. 24. As Christ died for fin, so we must die to

adly, Come and fee the justice of God. Many ways the great judge of the world hath made it to appear that he hates fin: and, both by the judgments of his mouth in the written word, and the judgments of his hand in the course of his providence, he hath revealed his wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and un-" righteoufnels of men." It is true that he is gracious and merciful; but it is as true, that "God is jea"lous, and the Lord revengeth," Nah. 1. 2. God, wen our God, is a confuming fire, and will reckon for the violation of his laws, and the injuries done to his from and dignity. The tenor of the feripture from the second of Genesis to the last of Revelation proves this, "The foul that finneth, it shall die." In many remarkable punishments of fin, even in this life, it is written as with a fun beam, so that he that runs may read, that the Lord is righteous, 2 Chron. xii. 6.

But never did the justice of God appear so conspi-

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Jefus

Tefus Chrift fet before us in this ordinance. Here his righteouthers is like the great mountains, though his judgments are a great deep, "Pfal. xxxvi. 6. Come and fee the holy God fliewing his displeasure against lib in the death of Christ, more than in the rule of angels, the drowning of the old world, the burning of Sodom, the destruction of Jerufalem; nav. more than in the torments of hell, all things confidered.

(1.) God manifested his justice, in demanding such fatisfaction for fin, as Christ was to make by the blood of his cross. Hereby he made it to appear how great the provocation was which was done him by the lin of man, that, not only fuch an excellent person must be chosen to intercede for us, but his fufferings and death mult be infifted on to atone for us. Sin, being committed against an infinite Majesty, seems by this to have in it a kind of infinite malignity, that the remitfion of it could not be procured, but by a fatisfaction of infinite value. If mere mercy had pardoned fin, without any provision made to answer the demands of injured juffice, God had declared his goodness: but, when lefus Christ is fet forth to be a propitiation for fin, and God is pleased to put himself to so vast an erpence, for the faving of the honour of his government in the forgiveness of fin, this declares his rightcoulnels; It declares, I fay, at this time his righteoufnels. See what an emphalis the apostle lays upon this, Rome 11. 25, 26.01 6 10 1 16 1 plesig it vol saud it amon't

Sin hath wronged God in his honour, for he cannot otherwise be wronged by any of his creatures. In breaking the law we dishonour God; we fin and come fhort of his glory: for this wrong, fatisfaction must be made; that which first offers itself is the eternal run of the finner; curat Lex; let the fentence of the law be executed, and thereby God may get him honor upon us, in lieu of that he flould have had from us Exod. xiv. 17. But, ean to expedient be found out it xicol:

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latisfy God, and yet fave the finner? Is it not posehe to offer an equivalent? "Will the Lord be pleas fed with thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil thall we give our first born for our transgref-"fion, the fruit of our body for the fin of our foul?" No, these are not tantamount: No submissions, forrows, supplications, services or sufferings of ours, can be looked upon as a valuable confideration for the highteous God to proceed upon, in forgiving fuch injuries, and reftoring fuch criminals to his favour. The best we do is impersed: the utmost we can do is already owing: Here therefore; the Lord Jefus inerpofeth, undertakes to make a full reparation of the injury done to God's glory by fin; cleathes himself with our nature, and becomes furety for us, as Paul for Onesimus, Philem. 18, 19. " If they have wronged thee, or owe thee ought, put that on mine account; "I have written it with mine own hand, with my own "blood I will repay it. He was made fin for us, 2 "Cor. v. 21. a curfe for us, Gal. iii. 13. An offering " for our fin, Ifa, liii. 10. he bore our fins in his own "body on the tree," I Pet. ii. 24. And thus the juftice of God was not only fatisfied, but greatly glorified. Come and fee how bright it shines here.

(2.) God manifested his justice in dealing as he did with him, who undertook to make satisfaction. Having "laid upon him the iniquity of us all, he laid it "home to him; for it pleased the Lord to bruise him, "and to put him to gries, Isa. lii 10. He was not "only despised and rejected of men, who knew him not, but he was stricken, smitten of God, and assistant "ed." The antient way in which God testisieth his receptance of sacrifices, was by consuming them with fire from heaven, Lev. ix. 25. 2 Chron. viii. 1. 1 Kings wiii. 38. The weath of God, which the offerers deferved should have sallen upon them, sell upon the offering; and so the destruction of the sacrasice was the escape

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escape of the sinner. Christ becoming a sacrasice for us, the fire of God's wrath descended upon him, which troubled his soul, put him into an agony, and made him cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou son saken me? Come then, and behold the goodness and severity of God, Rom. xi. 22. Christ being made sin for us, God did not spare him, Rom. viii. 32. By the determinate counsel and soreknowledge of God, he was delivered to them, who with wicked, bands crucissed and slew him. Awake, O sword, the sword of divine justice, surbished and bathed in heaven: "Awake, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my sellow, saith the Lord of hosts, smite the

" shepherd," Zeoh. xiii. 7.

Let us look on the fufferings of Christ, and fay, a he himself hath taught ns, Luke xxiii. 31. " If the " be down in the green tree, what shall be done in the "dry? What was done to him shews what should have been done to us if Christ had not interposed, and what will be done to us if we reject him. If this were done to the Son of God's love, what shall be done to the generation of his wrath? If this were done to one that had but fin imputed to him; who, as he had no corruptions of his own for Satan's temptations to fasten upon, so he had no guilt of his own for God's wrath to fasten upon, who was as a green tree, not abt to take fire : What shall be done to those who have fin inherent in them, which makes them as a dry tree, combustible and proper suel for the fire of God's wrath? If this were done to one that had done lo much good, what shall be done to us that had done it little? If the Lord Jefus himfelf was put into an agony by the things that were done to him, was forrowful and very heavy; "can our hearts endure, or can our hands be strong when God shall deal with us?" Ezek. xxii. 14. "Who would fet the briers and thorns " against him in batt'e i" From the sufferings of Christ WC

we may easily infer, what a "fearful thing it is to fall

into the hands of the living God, Heb. x. 31.

(3.) Come and see the love of Christ. This is that which, with a peculiar regard, we are to observe and contemplate in this ordinance; where we see Christ and him crucified, we cannot but see the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. When Christ did but drop a tear over the grave of Lazarus, the Jews said, "See how he loved him," John xi. 36. much more reason have we to say, when we commemorate the shedding of his blood for us. See how he loved us, Greater love hath no man than this, to lay down his life for his friend. Thus Christ hath loved us: nay, he laid down his life for us when we were enemies, John xv. 13. Rom. v. 8. Herein is love, love without precedent, love without parallel. Come and see the wonders of this love.

(1.) It was free love. Christ gave himself for us, nd what more free than a gift? It was free, for it was masked; nothing cried for this mercy, but our own milery; when no eye pitied us, of his own good will he relieved us, "faid to us when we were in our blood,
"Live; yea, he faid to us, Live: That was a time of live indeed. It was free, for it was unmerited; there was nothing in us defireable, nothing promifing; the relation we flood in to God as creatures, did but ggravate our rebellion, and make us the more ob. noxious. As he could not obtain any advantage by our happiness, so he would not have sustained any damage by our mifery: If there were no profit in our blood (which is pleaded, Pfal. xxx. 9.) yet for certain, there would have been no loss by it: No, but the realons of his love were fetched from within himfelf, as God's love of Israel was, Deut. vii. 7, 8. He loved them, because he would love them.—It was free, for was unforced: he willingly offered himself. Here am I, fend me. This facrifice was bound to the horns of the altar, only with the cords of his own love.

(2.) It was distinguishing love. It was good will tellen man, and not to fallen angels. He did not la hold on a world of sinking angels; as their tree sell, it lies, and so it is like to lie for ever: But on the feed of Abraham he taketh hold, Heb. ii. 16. The nature of angels was more excellent than that of man their place in the creation higher, their capacity so honouring God greater; and yet they were passed by Man that sinned was pitied and helped, while angel that sinned were not so much as spared. The deplot able state of devils serves as a soil to set off the ble sed state of the ransomed of the Lord.

(3.) It was condefcending love. Never did low humble itself and stoop so low as the love of Chri did. It was great condescension, that he should pite his love upon creatures fo mean, " Man that is a won " the fon of man that is a worm," fo near a-kin to brutal part of the creation, especially since the fall that one would think he should rather be the scot than the love of the spiritual and purely intelled world; yet this is the creature that is chosen to the darling of heaven, and in whom Wifdom's deligh are, Prov. viii. 31. But especially, that, in perfecution of this love, he should humble himself as he did humble himself to the earth in his incarnation; hum ble himself into the earth, in the meanness of life; hun ble himself into the earth, when he went to the grave the place where mankind appears under the greate mortification and difgrace.

(4) It was expensive love. His washing the so of his disciples, is spoken of as an act of love to the John xiii. It and that was condescending love, but no costly like this. He loved us and bought us, and pardear for us, that we might be unto him a purchase people, I Pet. ii. 9. Because he loved Israel, he gave men for them, and people for their life, even Egy for their ransom, Isa. xliii. 3, 4, but because he

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red us, he gave himself for us, even his own blood

the ranfom of our fouls.

(5.) It was firong love, firong as death, and which any waters could not quench, Cant. viii. 6, 7. This s the greatness of his strength, in which the Reemen travelled, who is mighty to fave, Ifa. lxiii. 1. was strong to break through great difficulties, and ample upon the discouragements that lay in his way. hen he had his baptism to be baptized with, this ptism of blood, it was love that faid, "How am I firaitened till it be accomplished? Luke xii. 50. It as love that faid, "With defire have I defired to eat this paffover, which he knew was to be his laft. was the Arength of his love that reconciled him to bitter cup which was put into his hand, and made wave his petition, "That it might pass from him;" which, for ought we know, if he had infifted on, it had been granted, and the work undone.

(6.) It was an everlasting love, Jer. xxxi. 3. It is from everlasting in the counsels of it, and will be everlasting in the consequences of it: Not like our we, which comes up in a night and perisheth in a ght. He loved to the end, and went on with his idertaking till he said, "It is sinished." Never was tere such a constant lover as the blessed Jesus, whose

is and callings are without repentance.

(7.) Come and see the conquest of Satan; and this a very pleasing sight to all those who through grace to turned from the power of Satan unto God, as it as to the Israelites, when they had newly shaken off to Egyptian yoke to see their task-makers and purters dead upon the sea-shore, Exod. xiv. 30. Come of see our Joshua discomsting the Amalekites: our livid with a sling and a stone, vanquishing that proud to say, who not only himself basely deserted, but then oldly defied the armies of the living God. Come of see, not Michael and his angels, but Michael himself.

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self, Michael our prince who trode the wine pres alone, entering the lists with the dragon and his an gels, and giving them an effectual overthrow: The feed of the woman, though bruised in the heel, ye breaking the serpent's head, according to that ancient promise made unto the fathers, Gen. iii. 15. Come and see the great Redeemer, not only making peace with earth, but making war with hell; dispossessing the strong man armed, "spoiling principalities and powers, making a shew of them openly, and triumph

"ing over them in his cross," Col. ii. 15.

Come and fee Christ triumphing over Satan at his death. Though the war was in heaven, Rev. xii. 70 yet some fruits of the victory even then appeared on earth. Though, when Christ was in the extremity of his fufferings, there was darkness over all the land which gave the powers of darkness all the advantage they could wish for; yet he beat the enemy upon his own ground. Satan, some think, terrified Christ in his agony, but then he kept possession of his own foul and fleadily adhered to his Father's will, and to his own underraking: fo he baffled Satan. | Satan put it into the heart of Judas to betray him; but in the immediate ruin of Judas, who prefently went and hanged himself, Christ triumphed over Satan; and made a shew of him openly. Satan tempted Peter to deny Christ, desiring to have him, that he might sist him as wheat; but, by the speedy repentance of Peter, who, upon a look from Christ, went out and wept bit terly. Christ triumphed over Satan, and baffled him in his defigns. Satan was ready to 'swallow up the thief upon the crofs, but Christ rescued him from the gates of hell, and raifed him to the glories of heaven and thereby spoiled Satan, who was as a lion disap pointed of his prev.

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min of the Philistines, dying than living. See Judges wi. 23. having by his life and doctrine, destroyed the works of the devil; at length by his death, "the defitroyed the devil himself, that had the power of "death," Heb. ii. 14. In him was suffilled the blessing of the tribe of Gad, Gen. xlix. 19. "A troop "shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the "last; and through him that loved us, we are con-

querors, yea, more than conquerors."

(1.) Christ, by dying, made atonement for sin, and so conquered Satan. By the merit of his death he satisfied God's justice for the sins of all that should believe in him: and if the Judge remit the sentence, the meentioner hath nothing to do with the prisoner. We were ready to fall under the curse, to be made in Anathema, that is, to be delivered unto Satan: Christ said, upon me be the curse; this blotted out the hand-writing that was against us, took that out of the way, nailed that to the cross; and so Satan is spoiled; who shall condemn? It is Christ that died, Rom. viii. 13, 34. When God forgives the iniquity of his people, he brings back their captivity, Pial. lxxxv. 1, 2. If we shall not come into condemnation, we are saved from coming into execution.

(2.) Christ, by dying, sealed the gospel of grace, and purchased the spirit of grace, and so conquered Stan. The spirit acting by the gospel as the instrument, and the gospel animated by the spirit as the principal, are become "mighty to the pulling down "of Satan's strong holds." Thus, a soundation is laid for a believer's victory over the temptations and terrors of the wicked one. Christ's victory over Satan is our victory, and we overcome him "by the blood of "the Lamb, Rev. xii. 11. Thus kings of armies did see apace, and even they that tarried at home, and did themselves contribute nothing to the victory, yet divided the spoil, Psal. Ixviii. 12. Christ having

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thus trodden Satan under our feet, he calls to us, as Joshua to the captains of sfrael, Josh. x. 24. "Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings:" Resist the devil, and he shall slee from you;" for he

is a conquered enemy.

(5.) Come and fee the worth of fouls. We judge of the value of a thing by the price which a wife man that understands it gives for it: He that made fouls, and had reason to know them, provided for their redemption, not "corruptible things as alver and gold, " but the precious blood of his own Son," See 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. It was not a purchase made hasfily, for it was the contrivance of infinite Wisdom from eternity; it was not made for necessity, for he neither needed us, nor could be benefited by us; but thus he was pleased to teach us what account we should make of our own fouls, and their falvation and happiness The incarnation of Christ put a great honour upon the human nature; never was it fo dignified, as when it was taken into union with the divine nature in the person of Immanuel: But the death and fufferings of Christ add much more to its value: for he laid down his own life to be the ranfom of ours, when nothing elfe was fufficient to answer the price, "Lord, what is " man that he should be thus visited, thus regarded! That the Son of God should not only dwell among us, but die for us!

Now, (1.) Let us fee this, and learn how to put a value upon our own fouls. Not fe as to advance our conceit of ourselves, nothing can be more humbling and abasing, than to fee our lives fold by our own folly, and redeemed by the merit of another; but so as to increase our concern for ourselves, and our own spiritual interests. Shall the souls, the precious souls which Christ put such a value upon, and paid such a price for, debase and undervalue themselves so sar as to become slaves to Satan, and drudges to the world

and the flesh? We are bought with a price, and therefore, we not only injure the purchaser's right to us, if we alienate ourselves to another, but we reproach his wisdom in paying such a price, if we alienate ourfelves for a thing of nought. It is the aposlle's argument against uncleanness, I Cor. vi. 20, and against making ourselves the servants of men, I Cor. vii. 23. Christ having purchased our souls at such a rate, we disparage them if we stake them to the trifles of this world, or pawn them for the base and fordid pleafures of fin. Shall that birth right be fold for a mess of pottage, which Christ bought with his own blood? No, while we live let our fouls be our darling (as they are called, Pfal. xvii. 20. - xxxv. 17.) for his fake to whom they were fo dear. If Christ died, and suffered fo much to fave our fouls, let us not hazard the lofing of them, though it be to gain the whole world, Matth. xvi. 26.

(2.) Let us fee this, and learn how to put a value upon the fouls of others. This forbids us to do any thing that may turn to the prejudice of the fouls of others, by drawing them to fin, or discouraging them in that which is good. The apostle lays a great stress upon this argument, against the abuse of our Christian liberty, to the offence of others, Rom. xiv. 15. "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ "died;" and again he urges it on the fame occasion, 1 Cor. viii. 12. Shall not we deny ourselves and our own fatisfaction, rather than occasion guilt or grief to them for whom Christ humbled himself, even to the death of the cross? Shall we slight those whom Christ put such a value upon? Shall we set those with the dogs of our flock, whom Christ purchased with his own blood, and fet among the lambs of his flock? God forbid.

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This also commands us to do all we can for the spiritual welfare and salvation of the souls of others.

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Did Christ think them worth his blood? and shall not we think them worth our care and pains? Shall not we willingly do our atmost to fave a foul from death. and thereby hide a multitude of fins, when Christ did fo much, and fuffered to much, to make it feafible? Shall not we pour out our prayers for them for whom Christ poured out his foul unto death? and bear them upon our hearts whom Christ laid so near his? Bleffed Paul, in confideration hereof, not only made himself. the fervant of all to pleafe them for their edification, but was willing to be " offered upon the facrifice and "fervice of their faith, Phil. ii. 17. and fo to fill up "what was behind of the afflictions of Christ for his "body's sake," Col. i. 24. And if we be at any time called upon even to lay down our lives for the brethren, we must remember, that in that, as well a in washing their feet, Christ hath left us an example, 1 John iii. 16.

(6.) Come and see the purchase of the blessings of the new covenant. The blood of Christ was not only the ransom of our sorieited lives, and the redemption of our souls from everlasting misery; but it was the valuable consideration upon which the grant of eternal life and happiness is grounded. Christ's death is our life; that is, it is not only our salvation from death, but it is the sountain of all our joys, and the soundation of all our hopes. All the comforts we have in possession, and all we have in prospect; all the privileges of our way, and all those of our home, are the blessed fruits of that accursed tree on which our Re-

deemer died.

(1.) See the blood of Christ, the spring from whence all the blessings of the covenant flow. That is the price of all our pardons, "We have redemption "through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," Eph. i. 7. without the shedding of blood, that blood, that precious blood, there had been no remission. That

That is the purchase of the divine savour, which is our life, we are made accepted only in the beloved, Eph i. 6. Peace is made, a covenant of peace fettled, and peace fecured to all the fons of peace, by the blood of his cross, and not otherwise, Col. i. 20. That is the price paid for the "purchased possession. "that they which are called may receive the promife "of eternal inheritance," Heb. ix. 15. Christ was made a curse for us, not only to redeem us from the curse of the law, but that we through him might inherit the bleffing, Gal. iii. 13, 14. Thus "out of the "eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong sweet-"nefs." Behold, he shews us a mystery.

(2.) See the blood of Christ, the stream in which all the bleffings of the covenant flow to us. The blood of Christ, as it is exhibited to us in this ordinance, is the vehicle, the channel of conveyance, by which all graces and comforts descend from heaven to earth-"This cup is the New Tellament in the blood of "Christ," and so it becomes a cup of blessing, a cup of consolation, a cup of salvation. All the hidden manna comes to us in this dew. It is the blood of Christ speaking for us, that pacifies an offended God: It is the blood of Christ sprinkled on us, that purifies adefiled conscience. As it was the "blood of Jesus "that confecrated for us the new and living way,"

and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers; fo it is by that blood that we have boldness " to enter

"into the holiest," Heb. x. 19, 20.

Come and fee how much we owe to the death of Christ, the rich purchases he made for us, that he might cause us to inherit substance, and might fill our treasures. Let this increase our esteem of the love of Christ, which was not only so very expensive to himfelf, but so very advantageous to us. Let this also inhance the value of covenant bleffings in our eyes. The bleffings of this life we owe to the bounty of God's providence, dence but spiritual blessings in heavenly things we owe to the blood of his Son: Let these therefore be to us more precious than rubies: Let these always have the presence: Let us be willing to part with any thing ruther than hazard the savour of God, the comforts of the spirit, and eternal life, remembering what these cost. Let us never make light of Wisdom's preparations, when we see at what rate they were brought in. To them who believe they are precious; for they know they were purchased with the precious blood of Christ, which we undervalue as a common thing, if we present carnests of it.

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Some Account of the precious Benefits which are to be received by Eaith in this ordinance.

TN the Lord's Supper, we not only " flew the Lord's death," and fee what is to be feen in it. as many who, when he was upon the crofs, flood afar off beholding: No, we must there be more than speciators, we must eat of the facrifice, and so "partake of the "altar," I Cor. xi. 18. The bread which came down from heaven was not defigued merely for fliew-bread, bread to be looked upon; but for houshould bread, bread to be fed upon, bread to firengthen our hearts, and wine to make them glad: and Wisdom's invitation is. "Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that "I have mingled!" Christ's feeding great multitudes miraculously, more than once, when he was here upon earth, was (as his other miracles) fignificant of the fpiritual provision he makes in the everlasting gospel for the support and fatisfaction of those that leave all to follow him: If we do not all eat, and be not " all filled, " abundantly

All people are for what they can get: Here is fornething to be got in this ordinance, if it be rightly improved, which will turn to our account infinitely more than the "merchandize of filver, or the gain of fine "gold." Christ and all his benefits are here, not only set before us, but offered to us; not only offered to us, but settled upon us, under certain provisos and limitations; so that a believer, who sincerely consents to the covenant, receives some of the present benefits of it in and by this ordinance; both in the comfortable experiences of communion with God in grace, and the comfortable expectations of the vision and fruition of God in glory.

Gospel ordinances in general, and this in particular, which is the seal of gospel promises, are wells of salvation, out of which we may draw water with joy; breasts of consolation, from which we may suck and be satisfied; golden pipes, through which the oil of grace is derived from the good olive, to keep our lamps burning: We receive the grace of God herein in vain, if we take not what is here tendered: gospel-blessings upon gospel-terms. We are here to receive Jesus Christ the Lord: and since "with him God freely gives us all things, Rom. viii. 32. we must with him by saith take what he gives: "All spiritual blessings "in heavenly things by Christ Jesus."

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First, Here we may receive the pardon and forgiveness of our fins. This is that great blessing of the new covenant, which makes way for all other blessings (removendo probibens) by taking down that wall of par-

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tition which separated between us and God, and hinders good things from us; It is the matter of that promife which comes in as a reason for all the rest: I will do fo and fo for them, " for I will be merciful to their "unrighteousness," Heb, viii. 11 .- This is that great bleffing which Christ died to purchase for us; his blood was shed for many, for the remission of fins; and perhaps he intimated this to be in a special manner defigned by him in his fufferings, when the first word we find recorded, that he spoke after he was nailed to the crofs, was, " Father forgive them," Luke xxiii. 34. which feems to look not only to those that had an immediate hand in his death, but to those that are remotely accessary to it, as all sinners are, though they know not what they do. 100 to be ago to at no and

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The everlatting gospel is an act of indemnity: an act of oblivion we may call it, for it is promised that our fins and iniquities he will remember no more; it is indeed an act of grace; repentance and remission of fins is by it published in Christ's name to all pations. It is proclaimed to the rebels, that, if they will lay down their arms, acknowledge their offence, return to their allegiance, approve themselves good subjects for the future, and make the merits of him whom the Father hath appointed to be the Mediator, their plea in fuing out their pardon, the offended prince will be reconciled to them, their attainder shall be reversed, and they shall not only be restored to all the privileges of fubjects, but advanced to the honours and advantages of favourites. Now it concerns us all to be able to make it out that we are entitled to the benefit of this act, that we are qualified according to the tenor of it, for the favour intended by it; and if we be fo indeed, in the Lord's Supper we receive that pardon to us in particular, which in the gospel is proclaimed to all in general. We do here receive the atonement as the expression is, Rom. v. 11. God hath received it for the

the fecuring of his honour, and we receive it for the fecuring of our happiness and comfort; we claim the benefit of it, and desire to be justified and accepted of

God for the fake of it.

The facrament should therefore be received with a heart thus lifting up itself to God: "Lord, I am a fin-"ner, a great finner; I have done very foolifhly; I " have forfeited thy favour, incurred thy difpleafure, "and deferve to be for ever abandoned from thee: "But Christ has died, yea rather is risen again; hath "finished transgression, made an end of fin, made re-"conciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlaft-"ing righteousness; he gave his life a ransom for many," and if, for many, why not for me? In him a free and full remission is promised to all penitent and obedient believers; by him all that believe are justified; and to them there is no condemnation. "Thou even thou art "he that blottest out their transgressions for thine "own fake, and art gracious and merciful, nay thou "art faithful, and just to forgive them their fins." Lord, I repent, I believe, and take the benefit of those promifes, those exceeding great and precious promifes, which are to my foul as life from the dead. I flee to this city of refuge, I take hold of the horns of this altar: Here, I humbly receive the forgiveness of my fins, through Jesus Christ, the great propitiation, to whom I entirely owe it, and to whom I acknowledge myself infinitely indebted for it, and under the highest obligations imaginable to love him, and live to him: He is "the Lord our righteousness," so I accept him; let him be made of God to me righteousness, and I have enough, I am happy for ever.

Every time we come to the Lord's Supper, we

come to receive the remission of sins, that is,

in (1.) A renewed pardon of daily trespasses. In many things we offend daily, and even he that is washed, that is in a justified state, needs to wash his feet, I John iii.

10. and, bleffed be God, there is a fountain opened for us to wash in, and encouragement given to pray for daily pardon as duly as we do for daily bread. We have to do with a God that multiplies pardon. Lord, the guilt of such a sin lies upon me like a heavy burden; I have lamented it, consessed it, renewed my covenants against it, and now in this ordinance I receive the forgiveness of that sin; and here it is said to my soul, "The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die." Many a sault I have been overtaken in, since I was last with the Lord at his table; and having repented of them, I desire to apply the blood of Christ to my soul in a particular manner for the forgiveness of them.

(2.) A confirmed pardon of all trespasses. I come here to receive further affurances of the forgiveness of my fins, and further comfort arising from those alfurances. I come to hear again that voice of joy and gladness, which hath made many a broken bone to rejoice, "Son, daughter, be of good cheer thy fins are " forgiven thee;" I come for the Father's kifs to a returning prodigal, which feals his pardon, fo as to filence his doubts and fears. When God would by his prophets speak comfortably to Zion, thus he faith "Thy warfare is accomplished, thine iniquity is par-"doned, Isa. xl. 2. And the inhabitant shall not fay, "I am fick," that is, he shall fee no cause to complain of any outward calamity, if his iniquity be forgiven, Ifa. xxxiii. 24. O that I might here have the white stone of absolution, Rev. ii. 17. and my pardon written more legible! O that Christ would fay to me as he did to that woman, to whom much was already forgiven, Luke vii. 48. " Thy fins are forgiven! This is that I come to receive, O let me not go away without it!

Secondly, Here we may receive the adoption of fons. The covenant of grace, not only frees us from the doom of criminals, but advanceth us to the dignity of child-

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ren; Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law in, order to this, that "we might receive the adoption "of sons," Gal. iv. 5. The children's bread given us in this ordinance, is as it were livery and sasine, to assure us of our adoption upon the terms of the gospel; that if we will take God in Christ to be to us a Father, to rule and dispose of us, and to be seared and honoured by us, he will take us to be his sons and daughters. "Behold what manner of love is this!" Be assonished, O heavens, and wonder, O earth! Never was there such compassionate, such condeteending love! God here seals us the grant both of the priveleges of adoption, and the spirit of adoption.

(1.) Here is a grant of the privileges of adoption scaled to us. Here we are called the children of God, and he calls himself our Father, and encourages us to call him so. "Seemeth it to you a light thing," saith David, I Sam. xviii. 23. "to be a king's ton-in-law, seeing I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?" And shall it not seem to us a great thing, an honour infinitely above all those which the world can pretend to confer for us who are worms of the earth, and a generation of vipers, children of disobedience and wrath by nature, to be the adopted children of the king of kings? "This honour have all the saints." Nor is it an empty title that is here granted us, but real advantages of unspeakable value.

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ldin; The eternal God here faith it, and feals it to every true believer, Fear not, I will be a Father to thee, an ever-loving, ever-living Father. Leave it to me to provide for thee, on me let all thy burdens be cast, with me let all thy cares be lest, and to me let all thy requests be made known. "The young lions shall lack "and suffer and hunger," but thou shalt want nothing that is good for thee, nothing that is fit for thee. My wisdom shall be thy guide, my power thy support, and "underneath thee, the everlasting arms. As the ten-

der father pities his children, fo will I pity thee, " and spare thee as a man spareth his son that serves 56 him." Thou shalt have my blessing and love, the fmiles of my face, and the kiffes of my mouth, and in the arms of my grace will I carry thee to glory, as the nurling father doth the fucking child. Doth any thing grieve thee? Whither shouldst thou go with thy complaint but to thy Father? faying to him as that child 2 Kings iv. o. "My head, my head; and thou " flialt find, that as one whom his mother comforteth, "fo will the Lord thy God comfort thee." Doth any thing terrify thee? "Be not afraid, for I am thy God: when though passeth through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not "overflow thee." Art theu in doubt? Confult me, and "I will instruct thee in the way that thou should "go, I will guide thee with mine eye." Acknowledge me, and I will direct thy steps. Dost thou offend? Is there foolishness bound up in thy heart? Thou must expect fatherly correction; "I will chasten thee with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the child-"ren of men, but my loving kindness will I not "utterly take from thee: thine afflictions shall not only confift with, but flow from, covenant love; and but for a feafon, when need is, shalt thou be in heavinefs.

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"I will be a Father to thee; and, Son, thou shalt be ever with me, and all that I have is thine; whe ther Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are thine," as far as is necessary to thine happiness; nor shall any thing ever be able to separate thee from my love. I will be a Father to thee, and then Christ shall be thy elder brother, the Prophet, Priest, and King of the samily, as the first born among many brethren. Angels shall be thy guard, with the greatest care and tenderness shall they bear thee up

in their arms, as ministring spirits charged to attend the heirs of falvation. Providencee shall be thy protector, and the disposer of all thine affairs for the best; so that whatever happens, thou mayst be sure it shall be made to work for thy good, though as yet thou canst not see how or which way. The affurances of thy Father's love to thee in his promises and communion with him in his ordinances, shall be thy daily bread, thy continual seast, the manna that shall be rained upon thee, the water out of the rock that shall sollow thee in this wilderness, till thou come to Canaan.

Now art thou a child of God, but it doth not yet appear what thou shalt be. When thou wast predestinated to the adoption of sons, thou wast designed for the inheritance of fons; if a child, then an heir. Thy present maintenance shall be honourable and comfortable, and fuch as is fit for thee in thy minority, while thou art under tutors and governors; but what is now laid out upon thee, is nothing in comparison with what is laid up for thee; an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away. If God be thy Father, no less than a crown, a kingdom shall be thy portion, and heaven thy home, where thou first be for ever with him: in thy Father's house there are many mansions, and one for thee, if thou be his dutiful child. It is thy Father's good pleafure to give thee the kingdom.

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(2.) Here is a grant of the spirit of adoption fealed to us. As the giving of Christ for us, was the great promise of the Old Testament, which was sulfilled in the sulness of time; so the giving of the Spirit to us is the great promise of the New Testament, and a promise that is sure to all the seed: this promise of the Father, which we have heard of Christ, we in this ordinance wait for, Asts 1. 4. and it follows upon the former; for wherever God gives the privileges of children, he will give the nature and disposition of

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children:

children: regeneration always attends adoption; " Because ye are fons, God hath fent forth the Spirit " of his Son into your hearts," Gal. iv. 6. Great encouragement we have to ask this gift, from the relation of a Father, wherein God stands towards us: If earthly parents "know how to give good gifts to their "children," fuch as are needful and proper for them, " much more shall our heavenly Father give the holy "Spirit to them that ask him," Luke xi. 18. He will give the Spirit to teach his children, and, as their tutor, to lead them into all truth, to govern his children; and, as the best of guardians, to dispose their affections, while providence disposeth their affairs for the best. He will give his Spirit to renew and fanctify them, and to make them meet for their Father's forvice in this world, and their Father's kingdom in a better world; to be the guide of their way, and the witness of their adoption, and to seal 

An carnest of this grant of the Spirit to all be lievers in this ordinance, Christ gave, when, in his first visit he made to his disciples after his resurrection, houng flewed them his hands and his fide, his pierced hands, his pierced fide (which in effect he doth to us in this facrament) he breathed on them, and faid unto them, " Receive ye the Holy Ghoft," John xx. 22. What he faid to them, he faith to all his disciples, making them an offer of this inestimable gift, and beflowing it effectually on all believers, who are all " fealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," Eph. i. 13. Receive ye the Holy Ghost then, in the receiving of this bread and wine the graces of the Spirit, as bread to Arengthen the heart, his comfort, as wine to make it glad. Be willing and defirous to receive the Holy Ghoft, let the foul and all its powers be put under his operations and influences; "Lift up your " heads, O ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting

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"doors, and then this king of glory shall come in! to all that invite him and will bid him welcome.

"But will God in very deed thus dwell with men, "with fuch men upon the earth?" And shall they become temples of the Holy Ghoft? Shall he come upon them? Shall the power of the Highest overshadow them? Shall Christ be formed in me a holy thing? Say then, my foul, fay as the bleffed virgin did, Here I am, "be it unto me according to thy word." Lacknowledge myfelf unworthy the being of a man, having so often acted more like a brute; much more unworthy the dignity of a fon; I have been an undutiful, rebellious prodigal; I deserve to be turned out of doors, abandoned and difinherited, and forbidden my Father's house and table: But who shall set bounds to infinite mercy, and to the compassions of the everlasting Father? If, notwithstanding this, he will yet again take me into his family, and clothe me with the best robe, though it is too great a favour for me to receive, who am a child of disobedience; yet it is not too great for him to give, who is the Father of mercies. To thee, therefore, O God, I give up myself; and I will " from this time cry unto "thee, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth," Jer. iii. 4. Though I deserve not to be owned as a hired lervant, I defire and hope to be owned as an adopted ion. Be it unto thy fervant according to thy promife.

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Thirdly, Here we may receive peace and fatisfaction in our own minds. This is one of the precious legacies Christ hathlest to all his followers, and it is here in this ordinance paid, or secured to be paid, to all those that are ready and willing to receive it, John xiv. 17. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give "unto you," such a peace as the world can neither give nor take away. This is the repose of the soul in God; our reconciliation to ourselves, arising from the sense of our reconciliation to God; the conscience

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being purged fron dead works, which not only defile, but diffurb and disquiet us. When the "Spirit is "peured out from on high, then the work of righteous" ness is peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness "and assurance for ever," Is a xxxiii. 15. 17. The guilt of sin lays the foundation of trouble and uneasiness; where that is removed by pardoning mercy, there is ground for peace; but there must be a farther act of the divine grace to put us in the actual possession of that peace; when he who alone can open the ear to comfort, as well as discipline, makes us to hear joy and gladness, then the storm ceaseth, and there is a calm. The mind that was disturbed with the dread of God's wrath, is quieted with the tokens of his savour and love.

This we should have in our eye at the Lord's table: here I am waiting to hear what God the Lord will speak, and hoping that he, who speaks peace to his people and to his saints, will speak that peace to me who make it the top of my ambition to answer the character, and have the lot of his people and saints. This peace we may here expect to receive for

two reasons.

(1.) Because this ordinance is a seal of the promise of peace: In it God assures us that his thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace, Jer. xxix. 11. and then ours towards ourselves may be so. We are here among his people, whom he hath promised to bliss with peace, Psal. xxix 11. and we may apply that promise to ourselves, plead it, and humbly claim the benefit of it. This is that rest to the soul, which our Master hath promised to all those that come to him, and take his yoke upon them, Matth. xi. 28, 29. and this promise among the rest is here ratified, as yea and Amen in Christ. The covenant of grace is a covenant of peace, in the blessed soil of which "light" is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the up-

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" right in heart," Pfal. xevii. 11. And this covenant of peace is that which eternal Truth hath faid, shall never be removed, but shall stand firm as a rock, when the "everlasting mountains shall melt" like wax, and the "perpetual hills shall bow," Ifa. 1. 10. Hath God fo far confulted my prefent repose, as well as my future blefs, that he hath provided, not only for the fatisfaction of his own justice, but for the fatisfaction of my conscience; and shall I indulge my own disturbance, and resuse to be comforted? No, welcome the promifed peace, the calm to long wished for, the defired haven of a troubled spirit, tolled with tempest. Come, my foul, and take possession of this Canaan: by faith enter into this rest, and let not thine own unbelief exclude thee, Heb. iv 3. If the God of peace himself speak peace, though with a still small voice, let that filence the most noify and clamorous objections of doubts and fears; and, if he give quietness, let not them make trouble, Job. xxxiv. 20.

(2.) Because this ordinance is an instituted means of obtaining the peace promised. As the facrifice was ordained to make atonement for the foul, fo the feaft upon the facrifice was intended for the fatisfaction of the foul concerning the atonement made, to remove that amazement and terror which arose from the conciousness of guilt. This ordinance is a feast appointed for that purpose. God doth here not only assure us of the truth of his promise to us, but gives us an-oppertunity of folemnizing our engagements to him, and fealing to be his, which is appointed not to fatisfy him, (he that knows all things, knows if we love him) but to fatisfy ourselves, that, thus taking hold of the hope fet before us, we may have strong consolation. The blood of Christ is in this ordinance sprinkled upon the conscience to pacify that, having been already sprinkled upon the mercy seat, to make atone-

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ment there, fo making the comers thereunto perfect. grands with the species of the states of

Heb. ix. 13, 14.

When the Lord lefus apeared to his disciples after his refurrection, the first word he faid to them was, " Peace be unto you," Luke xxiv. 36. and he faith the fame to us in this ordinance, Peace be unro this house, Peace to this heart. But the disciples of Christ, like those that are apt to be terrified and " affrighted, fuppoling that they had feen a spirit," or apparation, ver. 37. fearing that it is but all a delufion, it is too good news to be true: what have they to do with peace, think they, while their corruptions, follies, and infirmities are fo many? but Chrift, by wis facrament, cheeks those fears; as these, ver. 38, 30. " Why are ye troubled? And why do thought arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my seen. There is that in the marks of the nails, which is fufficient to stop the mouth of unbelief, and to heal the wounds of a broken and contrite spirit. There is merit enough in Christ; though in us there is nothing but meannels and nuworthinels. Such confiderations this ordinance offers, as has oft been found effectual, by the grace of God, to create the fruit of the lips, peace, and to reftore comfort to the mourners, Ifa. Ivit. 17, 18. In it Christ faith again, "Peace be unto "you," as he did, John xx. 21. And fometimes a mighty power had gone along with that word to lay a storm, as it did with that, Mark iv. 30. Peace be still; fo that the foul fo calmed, fo quieted, hath gone away, and faid with wonder, "What manner of man " is this? for even the winds and the feas obey him.

Fourthly. Here we may receive supplies of grace. Jesus Christ is in this ordinance made of God to all believers, not only righteoufness, but fanctification; fo we must receive him; and having received him to we must walk in him. It is certain, we have as much need of the influences of the Sprit to furnish us for our duties, as we have of the merit of Christ to atone

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for our fins; and as much need of divine grace to carry on the good work, as to begin it. We are in ourielves not only ungodly, but without thrength, impotent in that which is good, and inclined to that which is evil. Rom. v. 6. and, In the Lord alone have we both righteousness and strength, Ifa. xlv. 24. If therefore, we have it in him, hither we must come to have it from him; for gofpel ordinances, and this particularly, are the means of grace, and the ordinary vehicle in which grace is conveyed to the fouls of believers. Though God is not tied to them, we are, and must attend with an expectation to receive grace from God by them, and an entire submission of foul to the operation and conduct of that grace. This ordinance is as the pool of Bethelda, which our weak and impotent fouls must lie down by, waiting for the moving of the waters, as those that know there is a healing virtue in them, which we may experience benefit by, as well as others. Here, therefore, we must fet ourselves. expecting and defiring the effectual workings of God's free grace in us, attending at Wildom's gates for Wifdom's gifts, and endeavouring to improve the ordinance to this end.

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From the fulness that is in Jesus Christ, in whom "it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell," we are here waiting to receive grace for grace, John is 16. that is, "Abundance of grace, and of the gift of rightcousness," Rom. v. 17. Where there is true grace, there is need of more, for the best are fanctified but in part; and there is a desire of more forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, pressing towards persection; and there is a promise of more, for to him that hath shall be given: and "he that hath clean hands shall "be stronger and stronger:" Therefore, in a sense of our own necessities, and a dependence upon God's promises, we must by faith receive and apply to our-

felves the grace offered us. "What things foever "we delire," according to the will of God, "if we be. "lieve that we receive them," our Saviour hath told us, "we shall have them, Mark xi. 24. According to "thy faith be it unto thee.

Reach forth a hand of faith therefore, and receive the promised grace, both for the confirming of gracious habits, and for the quickening of gracious acts.

(1.) Let us here receive grace for the confirming of gracious habits, that they may be more deeply rooted. We are conscious to ourselves of great weakness in grace; it is like a grain of mustard feed, as a bruifed reed, and smoaking flax, we are weak in our knowledge, and apt to mistake; weak in our affections, and apt to cool; weak in our refolutions, and apt to waver: How weak is my heart! But here is bread that strengthens man's heart, signifying that grace of God, which confirms the principles, and invigorates the powers of the spiritual and divine life in the fouls of the faithful. Come, my foul, come eat of this bread, and it shall strengthen thee; though perhaps thou mayst not be immediately sensible of this strength received, the improvement of habits is not fuddenly difcerned, yet, through this grace, thou shalt find hereafter, that thy path hath been like the thining light, which shineth more and more.

We find there is much lacking in our faith, in our love, in every grace; here therefore we must defire and hope, and prepare to receive from Christ such gifts of the Holy Ghost as will be mighty through God to increase our faith, that its discoveries of divine things may be more clear and distinct, and its assurances of the truth of them more certain and consident; that its consent to the covenant may be more free and resolved, and its complacency in the covenant more sweet and delightful. And that which thus increaseth our faith will be effectual to inslame our love.

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love, and make that strong as death in its desires towards God, and resolutions for him. We must here wait to be strengthened with all might, by his spirit in the inner man, unto all patience in suffering for him, and diligence in doing for him, and both with joyfulness, Col. 1. 11. We here put ourselves under the happy influence of that exceeding great and glorious power, which worketh mightly in them that believe,

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(2.) Let us here receive grace for the quickening of gracious acts, that they may be more arongly exerted, we come to this throne of grace, this mercyfeat, this table of our God, that here we may not only obtain mercy to pardon, but may find "grace to "help in every time of need," Heb. iv. 16. Grace to excite us, to direct us in, and thoroughly furnish us for, "every good word and work, according as the "do y of every day requires." It was a very encouraging word which Christ faid to Paul, when he prayed for the removal of that messenger of Satan which was fent to buffet him 2 Cor. xii. o. " My "grace is fusheient for thee: and all true believers may take the comfort of it; what was faid to him is faid to all, whatever the exigence of the case is : they that commit themselves to the grace of God with a fincere refolution in every thing to fubmit to the ounduct and government of that grace, shall be enabled to do all things through Christ strengthening them. Then and agricult to are

Let a lively faith here descend to particulars, and receive this grace with application to the various occurrances of the Christian life. When I go about any duty of solemn worship, I find I am not sufficient of myself for it, not so much as to think one good thought of myself, much less such a chain of good thoughts as is necessary to an acceptable prayer, to the profitable reading and hearing of the word, and

the right fanctification of a Lord's day; but all our fufficiency for these services is of God, and of his grace. That grace I here receive according to the promise, and will always go forth, and go on in the strength of it.

When an opportunity offers itself of doing good to others, to their bodies, by relieving their necessities, or contributing any way to their comfort and fup. port; or to their fouls, by feafonable advice, infruction, reproof, or other good discourse; we must depend on this grace for ability to do it prudently. faithfully, and fuccefsfully, and fo as to be accepted of God in it. I find I want wisdom for these and such like fervices, and for the ordering of all my affairs; and whither shall I go for it but to Wisdom's feasts. whose preparations are not only good for food, and pleafant to the eye, but greatly to be defired to make one wife: Here therefore I receive "Christ Jesus the "Lord, as made of God unto me wisdom;" wisdom dwelling with prudence; wisdom to understand my way, that wisdom which in every doubtful case is profitable to direct. Having many a time prayed Solomon's prayer, for a wife and understanding heart, I here receive the fealed grant in answer to it; "Wif-"dom and knowledge are given thee," fo much as shall be sufficient for thee in thy place and station, to guide thee in glorifying God, fo as that thou mayest not come short of enjoying him.

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When we are assaulted with temptations to sin, we find how weak and ineffectual our resistance hath often been; here, therefore, we receive grace to sortify us against all those assaults, that we may not be soiled and overcome by them. All that in this sacrament list themselves under the banner of the Captain of our salvation, and engage themselves as his saithful soldiers in a holy war against the world, the slesh, and the devil, may here be surnished with the whole armour of God, and that power of his might, as it is called,

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called, Eph. vi. 10. wherewith they shall be able to stand and withstand in the evil day, Eph. vi. 10, &c. I now receive from God and his grace, strength against such a fin that hath oft prevailed over me, such temptation that hath oft been too hard for me; "Now "therefore, O God, strengthen thy hands." Through

God I shall do voilently.

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When we are burdened with affliction, we find it hard to bear up: we faint, in the day of adverfity, which is a fign our strength is small; we grieve too much, and are full of fears in a day of trouble, our hearts many a time are ready to fail us: hither therefore we come to receive grace fufficient for our fupport under the calamities of this prefent time, that, whatever we lose, we may not lose our comfort, and whatever we fuffer, we may not fink : Grace to enable us, whatever happens, to keep possession of our own fouls, by keeping up our hope and joy in God; that, when flesh and heart fail, we may find God the strength of our heart; and if he be fo, "as the day is, fo shall "thy strength be," Deut. xxxiii. 25. Such affurances are here given to all believers of God's presence with them in all their afflictions, and the concurrence of all for their good, that, being thus encouraged, they have all the reason in the world to say, welcome the will of God; nothing can come amis.

We know not how we may be called on to bear our testimony to the truths and ways of God in suffering for righteousness sake, we are bid to count upon them, and to prepare for them. We must in this ordinance saithfully promise, that however we may be tried, we will never torsake Christ, nor turn from sollowing after him; Though we should die with him, yet will we not deny him. But we have no reason to conside in any strength of our own, for the making good of this promise: Nor can we pretend to such a degree of resolution, steadiness, and presence of mind, as will

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enable us to encounter the difficulties we may meet with: Peter, when he shamed himself, warned us to take heed lest we fall, when we think we stand: Here therefore we must receive strength for such trials, that we may overcome them by the blood of the Lamb, and by not loving our lives unto the death, and that the prospect of none of these things may move us.

Laftly, How near our great change may be we can. not tell, perhaps nearer than we imagine: we are not fure that we shall live to see another opportunity of this kind; but this we are fure of, that it is a ferious thing to die, it is a work we never did, and when we come to do it, we shall need a strength we never had. In this facrament, therefore, from the death of Christ. we must fetch in grace to prepare us for death, and to carry us fafely and comfortably through that dark and difmal valley. I depend not only on the providence of God, to order the circumstances of my removal hence for the best to me, but upon the grace of God to take out the fling of death, and then to reconcile me to the firoke of death, and to enable me to meet death's harbinger, and bear its agonies, not only with the constancy and patience that becomes a wife man, but with the hope and joy that becomes a good Christian.

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riftly, Here we may receive the earnests of eternal bliss and joy. Heaven is the crown and centre of all the promises, and the persection of all the good contained in them; all the blessings of the new covenant have a tendency to this, and are in order to it. Are we predestinated? It is to the inheritance of sons? Called? It is to his kingdom and glory: Sanctified It is that we may be made meet for the inheritance and wrought to the self-same thing. This therefore we should have in our eye, in our covenant and communion with God; that eternal life which God that cannot lie promiseth. We must receive the Spirit in

his graces and comforts, as the earnest of our inheritance, Eph. i. 14. 2 Cor. i. 22 -v. 76 They that deal with God, must deal upon trust, for a happiness in reversion, a recompence of reward to come; must forfake the world in fight and present, for a world out of fight and future. All believers confent to this; they lay up their treasure in heaven, and hope for what they fee not. This they depend upon; and in prospect of it, they are willing to labour and fuffer, to deny themselves, and take up their cross, knowing that heaven will make amends for all; though they may be lofers for Christ, they shall not be lofers by him in the end: this is the bargain: In the Lord's Supper Christ gives us earnest upon this bargain, and what we receive there, we receive as earnest. An earnest not only confirms the bargain and secures the performance of it, but is itself part of payment, though but a small part in comparison with the full fum.

We here receive the earnest of our inheritance;

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(1.) We receive the affurance of it: the royal grant of it is here sealed and delivered by the King of

kings; Teste me ipso. God here saith to me as he did to Abraham, Gen. xiii. 14. "List up thine eyes now, "and look from the place where thou art:" Take a view of the heavenly Canaan, that land which eternally slows with better things than milk and honey, Immanuel's land: open an eye of saith, and behold the pleasures and glories of that world, as they are described in scripture, such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; and know of a surety that all the land which thou sees, and that which is infinitely more and better than thou canst conceive, to thee will I give it, to thee for ever. "Fear not, little flock," fear not, ye little ones of the flock, "it is your Father's good "pleasure to give you the kingdom." Follow Christ and serve him, and you shall be for ever with him:

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fhall shortly share with him in his glories. Only be faithful unto death, and the crown of life is as sure to you, as if it were already upon your heads. Here is livery and sasine upon the deed. Take this and eat it, take this and drink it; in token of this, "I will be "to thee a God;" that is, a perfect and everlasting happiness, such as shall answer the vast extent and

compals of that great word, Heb. xi. 16.

Come now, my foul, and accept the fecurity offered. The inheritance fecured is unspeakably rich and invaluable; the losses and sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with it; the title is good, it is a purchased possession, he that grants it hath power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life, John xvii. 2. The affurances are unquestionably valid, not only the word and oath, but the writing and feal of the eternal God, in the scriptures and sacraments: here is that, my foul, which thou mayft venture thyfelf upon and venture thine all for; do it then, do it with a holy boldness. Lay hold on eternal life, lay fast hold on it, and keep thy hold. Look up, my foul, look as high as heaven, the highest heaven; look forward my foul, look as far forward as eternity, and let eternal life, eternal joy, eternal glory be thine aim in thy religion, and refolve to take up with nothing short of thefe. God hath been willing more abundantly to shew to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counfel, and therefore hath thus confirmed it, fo as to leave no room for doubting, that by all these " im-"mutable things, in which it is impossible for God to "lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope fet before us, Heb. vi. 17, 18. Take him at his word then, and build thy hope upon it. Be not faithless, but believing; be not careless, but industrious. Here is a happiness worth friving for: "run with patience the race that is fet " before us," with this prize in thine eye. (2.) We

(2.) We receive the foretaftes of it. We have in this ordinance, not only a ratification of the promife of the heavenly Canaan, but a pattern or specimen given us of the fruits of that land, like the bunch of grapes which were brought from the valley of Esheol to the Israelites in the wilderness; a view given us of that land of promise, like that which Moses had of the land of Canaan from the top of Pifgah. As the law was a type and figure of the Messiah's kingdom on earth, fo the gospel is of this kingdom in heaven; both are as "shadows of good things to come," Heb. x. 1. like the map of a rich and large country in a fleet of raper. Our future happinels is, in this facrament, not only fealed to us, but shewed to us; and we here taste something of the pleasures of that better country. In this ordinance we have a fight of Christ, he is evidently set forth before us; and what is heaven, but to fee him as he is, and to be for ever beholding his glory? Weare here receiving the pledges and tokens of Christ's love to us, and returning the protestations and expresfions of our love to him; and what is heaven, but an eternal interchanging of love between a holy God and holy fouls? We are here praising and bleffing the Redeemer, celebrating his honour, and giving him the glory of his atchievements; and what is that but the work of heaven? It is what the inhabitants of that world are doing now, and what we hope to be doing with them to eternity. We are here in spiritual communion with all the faints, coming in faith, hope, and love to the general affembly and church of the firstborn; and what is heaven but that in perfection? In a word, heaven is a feast, and so is this; only this is a running banquet, that is an everlasting feast.

Come, my foul, and fee a door here opened in heaven; look in at that door now, by which thou hopest to enter shortly. Let this ordinance do something of the work of heaven upon thee, God having provideded

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In it something of the pleasures of heaven for thee. Heaven will for ever part between thee and sin; let this ordinance, therefore, set thee at a greater distance from it. Heaven will fill thee with the love of God; in this ordinance, therefore, let that love be shed abroad in thine heart. In heaven thou shalt enter into the joy of thy Lord; let that joy now enter into thee, and be thy strength and thy song. Heaven will be persect holiness; let this ordinance make thee more holy, and more conformable to the image of the holy Jesus: heaven will be everlasting rest: here, therefore, return to God as thy rest, O my soul, and repose thyself in him. Let every sacrament be to thee a heaven upon earth, and each of these days of the Son of man, as one of the days of heaven.

## CHAP. X.

Helps for the exciting of those pious and devout Affections which should be working in us while we attend this Ordinance.

the Lord's death is shewed forth; precious benefits are here to be had, where the covenant of grace is sealed; the transaction is very solemn, very serious, nothing more so on this side death: But what impressions must be made hereby upon our souls? How must we stand affected while this is in doing? Is this service only a shew, at which we may be unconcerned spectators? or is it a market-place, in which we may stand all the day idle? No, by no means: here is work to be done, heart-work, such as requires a very close application of mind, and a great liveliness and vigour of spirit, and in which all that is within us should be employed, and all little enough. Here is that

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that to be done which calls for fixed thoughts and warm affections, which needs them, and well deserves them. What fenfible movings of affection we should aim at, is not easy to direct; tempers vary; some are foon moved, and much moved with every thing that effects them; from fuch it may be expected, and their passions which are strong at other times, should not be weak at this ordinance; and yet no doubt there are others whose natural temper is happily more calm and fedate, that are not conscious to themselves of such flirring of affections as some experience at this ordinance, and yet have as comfortable communion with God, as good evidence of the truth and growth of grace, and as much real benefit by the ordinance as those that think themselves even transported by it-The deepest rivers are scarce perceived to move, and make the least noise. On the other hand, there, may be much heat where there is little light, and flrong passions where there are very weak resolutions. like the waters of a land flood, which make a great thew, but are shallow and foon gone: we must not therefore build a good opinion of our spiritual state upon the vehemence of our affection. A romance may reprefent a tragical flory fo pathetically, as to make a great impression upon the minds of some, who yet know the whole matter to be both seigned and foreign: Bodity exercise, if that be all, profits little. And, on the other hand, there may be a true and firong taith, informing the judgment, bowing the will, and commanding the affections, and purifying the heart and life, where yet there are not any transports, or pathetical expressions. There may be true joy, where the mouth is not filled with laughter, nor the tongue with finging; and true forrow, where yet the eye doth not run down with tears. They whose hearts are firmly fixed for God, may take the comfort of that, though they donot find their hearts fenfibly flowing out towards him. Q 3

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And yet in this facrament, where it is defigned, that the eye thould affect the heart, we must not rest in the bare contemplation of what is here fet before us, but the confideration thereof must make an impression upon our spirits, which should be turned as clay to the feal. If what is here done do not effect us for the prefent it will not be likely to influence us afterwards; for we retain the remembrance of things better by our affections than by our notions "I shall never forget "thy precepts, when by them thou hast quickened me." Here therefore let us flir up the gift that is in us, endeavouring to affect ourselves with the great things of God and our fouls; and let us pray to God to affect us with them by his spirit and grace, and to testify his acceptance of the facrifice of a devoted heart, which we are to offer, by kindling it with this holy fire from heaven. "Awake, O north wind, and come thou fouth, " and blow upon my garden." Come, thou bleffed fpirit, and move upon these waters, these dead waters, to fet them a moving in rivers of living water: come and breathe upon these dry bones, that they may live. O that I might now be in the mount with God? that I might be fo taken up with the things of the spirit, and the other world, that for the time I may even forget that I am yet in the body, and in this world ! O that I might now be foaring upwards, upwards towards God, preffing forwards, forwards towards heaven, as one not flothful in bufinels, but fervent in spirit, ferving the Lord, for here it is no time to trifle?

Let us then see in some particulars how we should be affected when we are attending on the Lord in this solemnity, and in what channels these waters of the sanctuary should run, that we may take our work before us, and apply our minds to the consideration of those things that are proper to excite those affections.

First, Here we must be forrowful for sin, after a godly fort and blushing before God at the thought of it.

it. Penitential grief and shame are not at all unsuitable to this ordinance, though it is intended for our joy and honour, but excellent preparatives for the benefit and comfort of it. Here we should be, like Ephraim, bemoaning ourselves; like Job, abhorring ourselves, renewing those forrowful reflections we made upon our own follies, when we were preparing for this service, and keeping the sountain of repentance still open, still flowing. Our forrow for sin needs not hinder our joy in God, and therefore our joy in God must not forbid our sorrow for sin.

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(1.) Our near approach to God in this ordinance should excite and increase our holy shame and forrow. When we see what an honour we are advanced to, what a favour we are admitted to, it is seasonable to restect upon our own unworthiness, by reason of the guilt of sin, to draw near to God. A man's deformity and desilement is never such a mortification to him as when he comes into the presence of those that are comely, clean, and sashionable; and when we are concious to ourselves that we have dealt basely and disingeniously with one we are under the highest obligations to love and honour, an interview with the person so of sasking and distance to the same that we have dealt basely and distance to love and honour, an interview with the person sasking and account that are not save as a same that are not save as a same that are not save as a save as

fon fo offended cannot but renew our grief.

I am hear drawing nigh to God, not only treading his courts with Christians at large; but sitting down at his table with select disciples; but, when I consider how pure and holy he is, and how vile and sinful I am, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face before him: To me belongs shame and consusion of face. I have many a time heard of God by the hearing of the ear, but now how I am taken to fit down with him at his table; mine eyes see him, see the King in his beauty: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. What a sool, what a wretch have I been, to offend a God who appears so holy in the eyes of all that draw nigh unto him, and so great to all them

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that are about him? Wo is me, for I am undone, lost and undone for ever, if there were not a Mediator between me and God, because I am a man of unclean lips, and an unclean heart: Now I perceive it, and my own degeneracy and danger by reason of it; for mine eyes hath seen the king, the Lord of hosts, Ifa. vi. 5. I have reason to be ashamed to see one I am so unlike to, and asraid to see one I am so obnoxious to. The higher we are advanced by the free grace of God, the more reason we shall see to abase ourselves, and cry

God be merciful to us finners.

(2.) A fight of Christ crucified, should increase and excite our penitential shame and forrow; and that evangelical repentance, in which there is an eye to the cross of Christ. It is prophesied, nay it is promifed, as a bleffed effect of the pouring out of the Spirit, in gospel-times " upon the house of David and the " inhabitants of Jerusalem, that they shall look on "him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn," Zech. xii. 10. Here we see Christ pierced for our fins, nay, pierced by our fins; our fins were the cause of his death, and the grief of his heart. The Jews and Romans crucified Christ but, as David killed Uriah with his letter, and Ahab killed Naboth with his feal; fo the hand-writing that was against us for our fins, nailed Christ to the cross, and so he nailed it to the cross. We had eaten the four grapes, and his teeth were fet on edge. Can we fee him thus fuffering for us, and shall we not suffer with him? Was he in such pain for us, and shall not we be in pain for them! Was his foul exceeding forrowful even unto death, and shall not ours be exceeding forrowful, when that is the way to life? Come, my foul, fee by faith the holy Jesus made sin for thee; the glory of heaven made a reproach of men for thee; his Father's joy made a man of forrows for thy transgressions; see thy fins burdening him when he fwate, fpitting upon him, and

and buffeting him, and putting him to open shame; crowning him with thorns, and piercing his hands and his side; and let this melt and break this hard and rocky heart of thine, and dissolve it into tears of godly sorrow. Look on Christ dying, and weep not for him, (though they who have any thing of ingenuity and good-nature, will see reason enough to weep for an innocent sufferer) but weep for thyself, and thine own sins; for them be in bitterness, as one that is in

bitterness for an only fon.

Add to this, That our fins have not only pierced him, as they were the cause of his death, but as they have been the reproach of his holy name, and the grief of his holy Spirit. Thus we have crucified him afresh, by doing that which he has often declared to be a vexation and dishonour to him, as far as the joys. and glories of his present state can admit. The confideration of this should greatly humble us: nothing goes nearer to the quick with a true penitent, nor touches him in a more tender part than this, Ezek. vi. 9. "They shall remember me among the hations "whither they shall be carried captives, because I "am broken with their whorish heart, which hath "departed from me." A strange expression, that the great God should reckon himself broken by the fins of his people! No wonder it follows, they " shall loath "themselves for the evils which they have committed." Can we look upon an humbled broken Christ with an unhumbled broken heart? Do our fins grieve him, and shall they not grieve us? Come, my foul, and sit down by the cross of Christ, as a true mourner; let it make the weep to fee him weep, and bleed to fee him bleed. That heart is frozen indeed, which thefe confiderations will not thaw.

(3.) The gracious offer here made us of peace and pardon, should excite and increase our godly forrow and shame. This is a gospel motive, "Repent for

"the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" that is, the promife of pardon upon repentance is published and fealed, and whoever will may come and take the benefit of it. The terrors of the law are of use to startle us, and put us into a horror for fin, as those that are afraid of God; but the grace of the gospel contributes more to an ingenuous repentance, and makes us more ashamed of ourselves. This rents the heart, to confider God fo gracious and merciful, fo flow to anger and ready to forgive, Joel ii. 13. Let this loving kindness melt thee, O my foul, and make thee to re lent more tenderly than ever. Wretch that I have been! to spit in the face, and spurn at the bowels of fuch mercy and love by my wilful fin! to despise the riches of gospel grace! I am ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I do bear the reproach of my youth Doth God meet thee thus with terms of reconciliation Doth the party offended make the first motion of at agreement? Shall fuch an undutiful, difobedient pro digit fon as I have been, be embraced and kiffed, and cloathed with the best robe? this kindness overcome me: Now, it cuts me to the heart, and humbles me to the duft, to think of my former rebellions; the never appeared fo heinous, fo vile, as they do, now fee them pardoned. The more certain I am that shall not be ruined by them, the more reason I see to be humbled for them. When God promifed to esta blih his covenant with repenting Ifrael, he add "That thou may I remember, and be confounded, an "never open thy mouth any more, because of the " fhame, when I am pacified towards thee," Ezek. xvi 62. 63. To see God provoked causeth a holy trem bling, but to fee God pacified caufeth a holy blushing The day of atonement, when the fins of Ifrael wer to be fent to a land of forgetfulness, must be a day t afflict the foul, Lev. xvi. 29. The blood of Chris will be the more healing and comforting to the foul for

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of fin. Secondly, Here we must be confiding on Christ lefus, and relying on him alone for life and falvation. When we mourn for fin, bleffed be God, we do not forrow as those that have no hope; true penitents are perplexed, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed. Faith in Christ turns even their forrows into joy, gives them their vineyards from thence, and even the valley of Achor, (of trouble for fin) for a toor of hope, Hof. ii. 15. We have not only an allfufficient happiness to hope for, but an all-sufficient Saviour to hope in: here therefore let us exercife and incourage that hope; let us trust in the name of the Lord Jesus, and stay ourselves upon him; come up out of this wilderness, leaning upon your beloved, Cant. viii. 5. Come, my foul, weary as thou art, and tell in Christ; cast thy burden upon him, and he shall Main thee; commit thy way to him, and thy thoughts' hall certainly be established; commit thyself to him, and it shall be well with thee; he will keep through his own name that which thou commitest to him. Commit thyfelf to him, as the feholar commits himelf to his teacher to be intrusted, with a resolution to take his word for the truth of what he teacheth; (oportet discentum credere) as the patient commits' himself to his physician to be cured, with a resolution to take whatever he prescribes, and punctually to oblerve his orders; as the client commits himself to his council, to draw his plea, and to bring him off when he is judged, with a resolution to do all such things as he shall advise; as the traveller commits himself to his guide, to be directed in his way, with a resolution to follow his conduct: as the orphan commits himself to his guardian, to be governed and disposed of at his difcretion, with a resolution to comply with him. Thus must we commit ourselves to Christ

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(1.) We must confide in his power, trusting in him as one that can help and fave us. (1.) He hath an uncontestible authority, is a Saviour by office, fanctified and fealed, and fent into the world for this purpose; help is laid upon him. We may well offer to trust him with our part of this great concern, which is the fecuring of our happiness; for God trusted him with his part of it, the fecuring of his honour, and declared himself well pleased in him, Matth. iii. 17. (2.) He hath likewise an unquestionable ability to save to the uttermost: he is mighty to save, and every way qualified for the undertaking: he is skilful; for treafures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him; he is folvent; for there is in him an inexhauftible fulnefs of merit and grace, fufficient to bear all our burdens, and to supply all our needs. We must commit ourfelves, and the great affairs of our falvation unto him, with a full affurance that he is "able to keep what "we commit to him against that day," that great day, which will try the foundation of every man's work, 2. Tim. i. 12.

(2.) We must consider in this promise, trusting in him, as one that will certainly help and fave us on the terms proposed. We may take his word for it, and this is the word which he hath spoken, "Him "that cometh unto me I will in no wife cast out." John vi. 37. a double negative, "I will not, no I will "not." He is engaged for us in the covenant of redemption, and engaged to us in the covenant of grace, and in both he is the Amen, the faithful witness. On this therefore, we must rely, the word on which he hath caused us to hope. God hath spoken in his holiness, that he will accept us in the beloved, and in that "I will " rejoice; I will divide Sichem, Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine," Pfal. lx. 6, 7. Pardon is mine, and peace mine, and Christ mine, and heaven mine: "for " faithful is he that hath promifed who also will do it." Comt

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Come then my foul, come thou, and all thy concerns into this ark, and there thou shalt be fafe when the deluge comes: Flee, flee, to this city of refuge, and in it thou shalt be secured from the avenger of blood. Quit all other shelters; for every thing but Christ is a "refuge of lies, which the hail will fweep away." There is not falvation in any other but in him: Truft him for it therefore, and depend upon him only. "Reach hither thy finger," and in this ordinance "be-"hold his hands, reach hither thy hand, and thrust it "into his fide," and fay as Thomas did. " My Lord, " and my God." Here I cast anchor here I rest my foul " It is Carift that died, year ather that is rifen again, " and is and will be the author of eternal falvation to "all them that obey him." To him I entirely give up myself, to be ruled and taught, and faved by him: and in him I have a full fatisfaction. I will draw near to God for mercy and grace, in a dependence upon him as my righteoufness; I will go forth, and go on, in the way of my duty, in a dependance upon him as my strength; I will shortly venture into the invisible, unchangeable world in a dependance upon him as the "Captain of my falvation," who is able to bring many fons to glory, and as willing as he is able. "Lord, I " believe, help thou mine unbelief."

Having thus committed thyfelf, my foul, to the Lord Jesus, comfort thyfelf on him. Please thyfelf with the thoughts of having disposed of thyfelf so well, and of having lodged the great concern of thy salvation in so good a hand; now "return to thy rest, O "my foul," and be easy. Every good Christian may, by faith triumph as the prophet doth, pointing at Christ, Isa. 1. 7, 8. "The Lord God will help thee, "therefore shall I not be consounded: therefore have "I set my face like a slint," in a holy desiance of Satan, and all the powers of darkness; "and I know "that I shall not be ashamed." He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me?" Take the

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Bible, turn to the viii. of the Romans, and read from ver. 31. to the end of the chapter: if ever bleffed Paul rode in a triumphant chariot on this fide heaven, it was when he wrote these lines, "What shall we then "say to these things," &c. Apply those comforts to thyself. "O my soul, thou hast said of the Lord, he "is my Lord; rejoice in him then, and be exceeding glad. Thy Redeemer is mighty, and he rides upon the heavens for thy help, and in his excellency on the sky, Deut. xxxiii. 26. "Do thou then ride upon the high places of the earth, and suck honey out of this "rock, and oil out of this slinty rock." Deut. xxxii. 13. Isa. Iviii. 14. Having made sure of thy interest in Christ, live in a continual dependence upon him; and, being satisfied of his love, be satisfied with it: thou

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haft enough, and needest no more.

Thirdly, Here we must be delighting in God, and folacing ourselves in his favour. If we had not Christ to hope in, being guilty and corrupt, we could not have a God to rejoice in; but, having an Advocate with the Father, so good a plea as Christ dying, and fo good a pleader as Christ interceeding. we may not only "come boldly to the throne of grace, but may " fit down under the shadow of it with delight and " behold the beauty of the Lord." That God, who is love, and the God of love, here sheweth us his "marvellous loving kindness; causeth his goodness to " pass before us: proclaims his name gracious and "mereiful:" Here he gives us his love, and thereby invites us to give him ours. It is a love feaft, the love of Christ is here commemorated, the love of God here offered; and the frame of our spirits is disagreeable, and a jar in the harmony, if our hearts be not here going out in love to God, the chief good, and our felicity. They that come hither with holy defires, must refresh themselves here with holy delights. If we must of rejoice in the Lord always," much more now; for a feast

a feast was made for laughter; and so was this for spiritual joy: if ever "Wisdom's ways be ways of pleasantness," surely they must be so when we come to "eat of her bread, and to drink of the wine which "she hath mingled."

Put thyself (then my soul) into a pleasant frame; let the joy of thy Lord be thy strength, and let this ordinance, "put a new song into thy mouth." Come

and hear the voice of joy and gladness.

(1.) Let it be a pleasure to thee to think "that "there is a God, and that he is fuch a one as he hath "revealed himself to be." The being and attributes of God are a terror to those that are unjustified and unfanctified; nothing can be more fo; they are willing to believe " there is no God, or that he is alto-"gether fuch a one as themselves," because they heartily wish they were none, or one that they could be at peace with, and yet continue their league with fin: but to those who, through grace, partake of a divine nature themselves, nothing is more agreeable, nothing more acceptable, than the thoughts of God's nature and infinite perfections. Delight thyfell therefore in thinking, that there is an infinite and eternal Spirit, who is felf-existent, and felf-sufficient, the best of beings, and the first of causes, the highest of powers, and the richest and kindest of friends and benefactors: the fountain of being, and fountain of bliss; the "Fa-"ther of lights, the Father of mercies," Love to think of him whom thou canst not see, and yet canst not but know; who is not far from thee, and yet between thee and him there is an infinite awful distance. Let these thoughts be thy nourishment and refreshment.

(2.) Let it be a pleasure to thee to think of the obligations thou liest under to this God as the Creator, He that is the former of my body, and the Father of my spirit, "in whom I live and move, and have my being," is upon that account my rightful

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owner, whose I am: and my fovereign Ruler, whom I am bound to ferve. Because he made me, and not I myself, therefore I am not mine own, but his, Pfal. c. 3. Please thyself (my foul) with this thought, that thou art not thine own, but his that made thee; nor left to thine own will, but bound up by his; not made for thyself, but defigned to be to him for a name and a praise. Noble powers are then intended for a noble purpose.—Delight thyself in him as the felicity and end of thy being, who is the fountain and cause of it. Were I to choose, I would not be mine own master, mine own carver, mine own centre: no, I would not, It is better as it is: I love to think of the eternal God, as the just director of all my actions, to whom I am accountable, and the wife disposer of all my affairs, to whom I must submit. I love to think of him as my chief good, who, having made me, is alone able to make me happy; and as my highest end, " of whom "and through whom, and to whom, are all things," Rom. xi. 36.

(3.) Let it be a pleasure to thee "to think of the " covenant relations wherein this God stands to thee " in Jesus Christ:" This is especially to be our delight in this fealing ordinance; though the facrament directs us immediately to Christ, yet through him it leads us to the Father. He died, "the just for the un-" just, that he night bring us to God." To God therefore we must go as our end and rest, by Christ as our way; to God as a Father, by Christ as Mediator. Come then, my foul, and fee with joy and the highest fatisfaction, the God that made the entering into covenant with thee, and engaging to make the happy. Hear him faying to thee my foul, "I am thy falva-"tion, thy shield;" and not only thy bountiful rewarder, but thine exceeding great reward, I am and will be to thee a God all-fufficient; a God that is enough. " Fear thou not for I am with thee," whereever thou

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thou art; "be not difmaid, for I am thy God;" whatever thou wantest, whatever thou losest, call me God. even thine own God; when thou art weak, I will strengthen thee, yea, when thou art helpless, I will help thee; yea, when thou art ready to fink, "I " will uphold thee with the right hand of my righte-"ouinels," Ifa. xli. 10. The God that cannot lie hath faid it, and here feals it to thee, "I will never " leave thee nor for lake thee." Let this be to thee my foul, the voice of joy and gladness, making even broken bones to rejoice. Encourage thyfelf in the Lord thy God. He is thy Shepherd, thou shalt not want any thing that is good for thee, Pfal. xxiii. I. &c. "Thy " Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name." Ifa. liv. 5. and, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over " the bride, fo shall thy God rejoice over thee, Ifa. lxii. 35 He shall rest in his love to thee, Zech. iii. 17. Rest then in thy love to him, and rejoice in him always. "The Lord is thy Lawgiver, thy King that will fave thee," Isa. xxxiii. 22. Swear allegiance to him then with gladness, and loud hosanna's: "Let Israel " rejoice in him that made him, that new made him: Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." Pfal. cxlix. 2. What wouldest thou more? " This God is thy God for ever and ever.

Stir up thyfelf (my foul) to take the comfort which is here offered thee. Let this strengthen the weak hands, let it confirm the seeble knees: If God be indeed the "health of thy countenance and thy God, "why art thou cast down? why art thou disquieted?" Die not for thirst when there is such a fountain of living waters near thee, but draw water with joy out of these wells of salvation. Shiver not for cold when there is such a reviving, a quickening heat in these promises, but say with pleasure, "Aha, I am a worm, "I have seen the fire," Isa. viv. 16. Faint not for hunger, now thou art at a scast of sat things, but be abundantly satisfied with the goodness of God's house.

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Pfal. xxxvi. 8.-lxv. 4. The God whofe wrath and frowns thou half incurred, here favours thee, and fmiles on thee; let this therefore give thee a joy greater than the joy of harvest, and far furpassing what they have that divide the spoil. Though thou canst not reach to holy raptures, yet compose thyself to a holy rest: Delight thyself always in the Lord, especially at this ordinance, and, by thus taking the comfort of what thou hall received, thou qualifieft thyfelf to receive more; for then he shall give thee the desire of thy heart, Pfal. xxxvii. 4. The way to have thine heart's defire, is to make God thy heart's delight. Triumph in his love, and thine interest in him: His benignity is better than life, let it be to thee fweeter than life itself. "Behold God is my Saviour, God is " my falvation, I will trust and not be afraid: for the " Lord Jehovah is my strength, and therefore my fong; " the firength of my heart and my portion for ever," Ila. xii. 2. Pfal. lxxiii. 26. When thou comest to the altar of God, call him, "God thy exceeding joy," Pfal. xliii. 4. "Thy God, thy glory," Ifa. lx. 19.

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Fourthly, Here we must be admiring the mysteries and miracles of redeeming love. They that worshipped the beaft are faid to wonder after him, Rev. xiii. 3. fo must they that worship the Lamb; for he hath done marvellous things. We have reason to say, that we were fearfully and wonderfully made; but, without doubt, we were more fearfully and wonderfully redeemed. We were made with a word, but we were bought with a price; fland still then and fee the falvation of the Lord fee it with admiration. Affect thyfelf (my foul) with a pleasing wonder, while thou art feeing this great fight. The everlasting gospel is here magnified and made honourable, let it be so in thine eyes; call it the glorious gospel of the bleffed God. Let us take a view of some of the marvellous things which are done in the work of our redemption (1.) The

(1.) The contrivance of the salvation is marvellous: It would have for ever puzzled the wisdom of
angels and men, to have found out such a method of
salvation as might effectually satisfy God's justice, and
yet secure men's happiness; save the life of the lawbreaker, and yet maintain the honour of the law-maker.
This is that mystery which the angels desire to look
into, and which the most piercing eye of those inquisitive spirits, that see by the light of the upper world
will not be able to eternity to discern the bottom of.
O the depth of this hidden wisdom.

(2.) The purpose of God's love concerning it from eternity are marvellous. Be assonished, O my soul, at this, That the God who was infinitely happy in the contemplation and enjoyment of himself and his own persections, should yet think thoughts of love towards a remnant of mankind, and towards thee amongst the rest, and design such savours for them, such savours for thee, before the worlds were! "How precious "should these thoughts be unto us! For, how great is

" the fum of them !" Pfal. cxxxix. 17.

(3.) The choice of the Perfon who should undertake it is marvellous; the Son of his love, that in parting with him for us he might commend his love! The eternal Wisdom, the eternal Word, that he might effectually accomplish this great design, and might not sail nor be discouraged. A person every way sit both to do the Redeemer's work, and to wear the Redeemer's crown. It is spoken of as an admirable invention, Job xxxiii. 24. "I have found a ran-"som:" and Psal. lxxxix. 19, 20. "I have found David my servant." On earth there was not his like, nor in heaven neither.

(4.) The Redeemer's consent to the undertaking is marvellous. Considering his own dignity and self-fussiciency, our unworthiness and obnoxiousness, the difficulty of the service, and the ill requitals he fore-

faw from an ungrateful world, we have reason to admire that he should be so free so sorward to it, and should say, "Lo I come: Here am I, send me."

Never was there such a miracle of love and pity;

verily it passeth knowledge.

(5.) The carrying on of his undertaking in his humiliation is marvellous. His name was Wonderful. Ifa. ix. 6. His appearance in the world, from first to last, was a continued feries of wonders; without controverly, great was this mystery of godliness. The bringing of the first begotten into the world, was attended with the adorations of wondering angels, Heb. i. 6. His doctrine and miracles, while he was in the world, were admirable; they that heard the one, and faw the other, were beyond measure astonished. But, his going out of the world was the greatest wonder of all; it made the earth to shake, the rocks to rend and the fun to cover his face. Never was there fuch. a martyr, never such a facrifice, never such a paradox of love as that was. "God forbid that we " should glory fave in the cross of Christ; which " is so much the wisdom of God, and the power of " God."

(6.) The honours of this exalted state are marvellous. He that was for a little while lower than the angels, a worm and no man, is now the Lord of angels. One in our nature is advanced to the highest honours, invested with the highest powers; having an uncontestable authority to execute judgment, even for this reason, because he is the son of man, John v. 27, not only though he is so, but because he is so. This is the Lord's doing, and it is, and should be, marvellous in our eyes.

(7.) The covenant of grace, made with us in him, is marvellous. The terms of the covenant are wonderful, reasonable and easy; the treasures of the covenant are wonderful, rich and valuable. The cove-

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nant itself is well-ordered in all things, and sure; admirable well, both for the glory of God, and the comfort of all believers. God in it " sheweth us his marvellous loving kindnefs, Pfal. xvii. 7. and we answer not the defign of the discovery, if we do not admire it. Other things, the more they are known, the less they are wondered at; but the riches of redeeming love appear more admirable to those that are best ac-

quainted with them.

Fiftbly, Here we must be caring what we shall render to him that hath thus loved us. This wondrous love is love to us, and not only gives the greatest encouragements to us to come to God for mercy and peace, but lays the strongest engagements upon us to walk with God in duty and obedience. We are bound in conscience, bound in honour, and in gratitude, to love him, and live to him, who loved us, and died for us. This concern should much affect us, and lie very near our hearts, how we may answer the intentions of this love?

(1) We should be affected with a jealous sear lest, we prove ungrateful, and, like Hezekiah, " render not "again according to the benefit done unto us," 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. We cannot but know fomething. by fad experience of the treachery and deceitfulness of our own hearts, and how apt they are to flart afide like a broken bow; and therefore we have no reason to presume upon our own strength and sufficiency: we are told of many who eat and drink in Christ's presence and yet are found at last unsaithful to him; and what if I should prove one of those: This thought is not fuggested here to amuse any that tremble at God's word or to weaken the hands and fadden the hearts of those that are truly willing though very weak; but to awaken those that slumber, and humble those that are wife in their own conceit. Distrust thyfelf, O my foul, that thou mayft trust in Christ only; fear

fear thine own strength, that thou mayst hope in his. He that hath done these great things for thee, must be applied to and depended on to work those great things in thee, which are required of thee: Go forth, therefore, and go on in his strength. If the same that grants us those savours, give us not wherewithal to make suitable returns for them, we shall perish for

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(1.) We should be filled with serious desires to know and do our duty, in return for that great love wherewith we are loved. The affections of a grate. ful mind are very proper to be working in us at this ordinance. Doth not even nature teach us to be grateful to our friends and benefactors? Let us be fo to Christ then, the best of friends, and kindest of benefactors. Come, my foul, here I fee how much I am indebted, and how I owe my life, my joy, and hope, and all to the bleffed Jesus; and is it not time to alk. with holy David, Pfal. exvi. 12. "What shall I ren-" der unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" Shall I not take the cup of falvation, as he doth there, ver. 13. with this thought, What shall I render? Let David's answer to that question which we find in that pfalm, be mine;

(1.) "I love the Lord," ver. 1. Love is the loadfrone of love; even the Publicans love those that love
them; Lord, thou hast loved me with an everlasting
love; from everlasting in the counsels of it, to everlasting in the consequences of it: and shall not my
heart with this loving kindness be drawn to thee!

Jer. xxi. 3. Lord I love thee; the world and the
slesh shall never have my love more; I have loved
them too much, I have loved them too long, the best
affections of my soul shall now be consecrated to thee,
O God: to thee, O blessed Jesus! "Whom have I
"in heaven but thee? Lord, thou knowest all things,
"thou knowest that I love thee." It is my forrow

and shame, that I am so weak and desective in my love to thee: what a wretched heart have I, that I can think, and speak, and hear, and see so much of thy love to me, and be so little affected with it! So low in my thoughts of thee, so cool in my desires towards thee, so unsteady in my resolutions for thee! Lord pity me, Lord help me, for yet I love thee; I love to love thee: I earnestly desire to love thee better, and long to be there, where love shall be made persect

(24) I will offer to thee the facrifice of thanksgiving, ver. 17. As love is the heart of praise, fo praise is the language of love. What shall I render? I must render to all their due: tribute to whom tribute is due: the tribute of praise to God, to whom it is due. We do not accommodate ourselves to this thanksgiving feast, if we do not attend it with hearts enlarged in thankfgiving, this cup of falvation must be a cup of bleffing, in it we must blis God, because in it God bleffeth us. Thankful acknowledgements of God's favours to us are but poor returns for rich receivings, yet they are fuch as God will accept, if they come from an upright heart; "Bless the Lord therefore, "O my foul, and let all that is within me blifs his "holy name." Speak well of him who hath done well for thee. Thank him for all his gifts both of nature and grace, especially for Jesus Christ the spring of all. "As long as I live, I will blefs the Lord, yea I will "praise my God while I have my being;" for he is the God of my life, and the author of my well-being; and, when I have no life, no being on earth, I hope to have a better life, a better being in a better world, and to be doing this work for ever in a better manner.

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(4.) "O Lord, truly I am thy fervant, I am thy "fervant," ver. 16. I acknowledge myself already bound to be so, and surther oblige myself by solemn promise

promise to approve myself so. What shall I render? Lord I render myself to thee, my whole self, body, and soul, and spirit; not in compliment, but in truth and sincerity; I own myself thy servant, to obey thy commands, to be at thy disposal, and to be serviceable to thine honour and interest; it will be my credit and ease, my safety and happiness, to be under thy government, make me as one of thy hired servants.

(4.) " I will call upon the name of the Lord" ver. 13. This is an immediate answer to that question, - What shall I render? And it is surprissing answer; it is uncommon among men to make petitions for further favours, or returns for former favours; yet fuch a return as this, the God that delights to hear prayers, will be well pleased with. Is God my father? I will apply myfelf to him as a child, and call him, Abba, Father. Have I an advocate with the Father? Then I will come boldly to the throne of grace. Are there such exceeding great and precious promises made me, and sealed to me? Then will I never lofs the benefit of them for want of putting them in fuit. As I will love God the better, fo I will love prayer the better as long as I live: and having given myself unto God, I will give myself unto prayer, as David did, Pfal. cix. 4 till I come to the world of everlasting praise.

(5.) "Return unto thy rest, O my soul," ver. 7. The God who hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants, would have them easy to themselves; and that they can never be, but by reposing in him; this therefore we must render: It is work that has its own wages; honour God by resting in him, please him by being well pleased in him. Having received so much from him, let us own that we have enough in him, and that we can go no where but to him with any hopes of satisfaction. Lord whither shall we go? He

hath the words of eternal life.

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(6.) "I will walk before the Lord in the land of "the living," ver. 9. A holy life, though it cannot profit God, yet it glorifieth him: and therefore it is infifted upon as a necessary return for the favour's we have received from God. While I am here in the land of the living, I will walk by faith, having mine eyes ever towards the Lord, to see him as he reveals himself, hoping, that shortly in that land, which is truly the land of the living, above, I shall walk by sight, having mine eyes ever upon the Lord, to see him as he is. God hath here sealed to be to me a God all-sufficient: here therefore I seal to him, according to the tenor of the covenant, that, his grace enabling me, I will "walk before him, and be upright," Gen. kvii. I.

(7.) "I will pay my vows unto the Lord," ver. 14.
18. Those that receive the blessings of the covenant, must be willing, not only to come, but always to abide under the bonds of the covenant. Here we must make vows, and then go away and make them good.

More of this in the next chapter.

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## O H A P. XI.

Directions concerning the folemn vows we are to make to God in this ordinance.

Religious vow is a bond upon the foul; fo it is described, Numb. xxx. 2. where he that voweth a vow unto the Lord, is said thereby to bind his soul with a bond. It is a solemn promise, by which we voluntarily oblige ourselves to God and duty, as a "willing people in the day of his power," Psal. cx. 3. The cords of a man, and bonds of love, wherewith God draws us and holds us to himself, call upon us by our own act and deed to bind ourselves? and these

vows also are cords of a man, for they are highly reasonable; and bands of love, for, to the renewed soul,

they are an eafy yoke, and a light burden.

trom all the other parts of our work at the Lord's table, we may infer, that this is one part of it: we must there make solemn vows to God, that we will

diligently and faithfully ferve him.

(1.) We are here to renew our repentance for fin, and it becomes penitents to make yows. When we profess ourselves forry for what we have done amifs, it is very natural and necessary to add, that, " we will not offend any more, as we have done: if I " have done iniquity I will do fo no more," Job. xxxiv. 31. 32. We mock God, when we fay, we repent that we have done foolifuly, if we do not at the fame time refolve that we will never return again to folly, Pfal. lxxxv. 8. Times of affliction are proper times to make vows; und what is repentance but felf-affliction? Trouble for fin was not the least of that trouble which David was in, when his lips uttered those vows which he spoke so feelingly of, Pfal. lxvi. 23, 24. Probably it was under this penitential affliction that he "fware unto the Lord and vowed unto the mighty "God of Jacob, that he would find a place for the " ark," Pfal. exxxii. 1, 2. Vows against fin, resulting from forrow for fin, shall not be rejected as extorted by the rack, but graciously accepted as the genuine language of a broken heart, and fruits meet for repentance,

(2.) We are here to ask and receive mercy from God, and it becomes petitioners to make vows. When Jacob found himself in special need of God's gracious presence, he vowed a vow, and set up a stone, for a memorial of it, Gen. xxviii. 20. And Hanna, when she prayed for a particular mercy, vowed a vow, that the comfort she prayed for, should be consecrated to God great and precious things we are here waiting to receive

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receive from God; and therefore, though we cannot offer any thing as a valuable confideration for his favours, yet it becomes us to promife fuch suitable returns as we are capable of making. When God encourageth us to feek to him for grace, we must engage ourselves, not to receive his grace in vain, but to improve and employ for him what we have from him.

(3.) We are here to give God thanks for his favours to us: now, it becomes us in our thanksgivings to make vows, and to offer to God, not only the calves of our lips, but the work of our hands. Jonah's mariners, when they offered a sacrifice of praise to the Lord, for a calm after a storm, as an appendix to that sacrifice, made vows, Jonah i. 16. The most acceptable vows are those which take rise from gratitude, and which are drawn from us by the mercies of God. Here I see what great things God hath done for my foul, and what greater things he designs for me; shall I not therefore freely bind myself to that which he hath by such endearing ties bound me to?

(4.) We are here to join ourseives to the Lord in an everlafting covenant. And it is requifite, that our general covenant be explained and confirmed by particular vows. When we prefent ourselves to God as aliving facrifice, with those cords we must bind that facrifice to the horns of the altar; and while we experience in ourselves such a bent to backslide, we shall find all the arts of obligation little enough to be used with our own souls. As it is not enough to confess fin in the gross, saying, I have finned, but we must enter into the detail of our transgressions, faying, with David, I have done this evil; fo it is not enough in our covenanting with God, that we engage ourselves in the general to be his, but we must descend to particulars in our covenants, as God doth in his commands, that thereby we may the more effectually both bind ourselves to duty, and mind ourselves of duty. duty. If the people must distinctly say amen to every curse pronounced on mount Ebal, Duet. xxvii. much more to every precept delivered on mount Horeb.

Come then, my foul, thou hast now thy hand upon the book to be fworn: thou art lifting up thy hand to the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth : think what thou art doing, and adjust the particulars, that this may not become a rash oath, inconfiderately taken. God is here confirming his promifes to us, by an oath, to shew the immutability of his counsels of love to us, Heb. vi. 17, 18. Here, therefore, we must conform our promise to him by an oath, to walk in God's law, and to "observe and do all the " commandments of the Lord our God," Neh. x. 20. Some of the Oriental writers tell us, that the most folemn oath which the Patriarchs before the flood used, was, by the blood of Abel, and we are fure that the blood of Jefus is infinitely more facred, and speaks much greater, and much better things than that of Abel. Let us therefore testify our value for that blood, and fecure so ourfelves the bleffings purchafed by it, by our fincere and faithful dealing with God in that covenant, which this is the blood of.

The command of the eternal God, is, that we cease to do evil, and learn to do well: that we put off the old man, and put on the new: And our vows to God must accordingly be against all sin, and to all duty and under each of these heads, we must be

particular according as the cafe is.

First, We must here by a solemn vow bind ourselves from all sin; so as not only to break our league
with it, but to enter into league against it. The putting away of the strange wives, in Ezra's time, was
not the work of one day or two, Ezra x. 13. but a
work of time, and therefore Ezra, when he had the
people under convictions, and saw them weeping fore
for their sin, in marrying them, very prudently bound
them

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them by a solemn covenant that they would put them away, verse 3. If ever we conceive an aversion to sin, surely, it is at the table of the Lord; and therefore, we should improve that opportunity to invigorate our resolutions against it, that the remembrance of those resolutions may quicken our resistance of it, when the sensible impressions we are under from it are becom less lively. Thus we must by a solemn vow cast away from us all our transgressions, saying with Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Hos. xiv. 8.

(f.) We must solemnly vow, That we will not indulge or allow ourselves in any sin. Though sin may remain, it shall not reign; though those Canaanites be in the land, yet we will not be tributaries to them. However it may usurp and oppress as a tyrant, it shall never be owned as a rightful prince, nor have a peaceful and undisturbed dominion. I may be in some particular instances, through the surprise of temptations, led into captivity by it; but I am sully resolved in the strength of Christ, that I will never join in affinity with it, will never espouse its cause, never plead for it, nor strike in with its interest.

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Bind thyself with this bond, O my soul, that though through the remainders of corruptions, thou canst not say, Thou hast no sin: yet, through the beginnings of grace, thou wilt be able to say, Thou lovest none. That thou wilt give no countenance or contrivance to any sin; no, not to secret sins, which, though they shame thee not before men, yet shame the before God, and thine own conscience; no not to heart sins, those sirst-born of the corrupt nature, the beginning of its strength. Vain thoughts may intrude, and sorce a lodging in me, but I will never invite them, never bid them welcome, nor court their slay; corrupt affections may disturb me, but they shall never have the quiet and peaceable possession of me;

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no, whatever wars against my foul, by the grace of God, I will war against it, hoping in due time to get the dominion, and have its yoke broken from off my neck, when "judgment shall be brought forth into

"victory," and grace perfected in glory.

(2.) We must folemnly vow, That we will never vield to any grofs fin, fuch as lying, injustice uncleannels, drunkennels, profination of God's name, and fuch like, which are not the fpots of God's children. Though all the high places be not taken away, yet there shall be no remains of Baal, or of Baal's priests. and alters in my foul. However my own heart may be spotted by fins of infirmity, and may need to be daily washed, yet, by the grace of God, I will never fpot my profession, nor stain the credit of that by open and frandalous fin. I have no reason to be ashamed of the gospel, and therefore it shall be my constant endeavour, not to be in any thing a shame to the gofpel: it is an honour to me. I will never be a diffronour to it: I will never do any thing, by the grace of God I will not, which may give just occasion to the enemies of the Lord to "blaspheme that worthy name "by which I am called." So shall it appear, that I am upright, if I be innocent from these great transgreffions, and truly penitent for all my transgreffions, Pfal. xix. 13.

(3.) We must folemnly vow, That with a particular care we will keep ourselves from our own iniquity. That sin, which, in our penitent resections, our own consciences did most charge us with, and reproach us for, that sin we must in a special manner renew our resolutions against. Was it pride? Was it passion? Was it distrust of God, or love of the world? Was it an unclean sancy, or an idle tongue? Whatever it was, let the spiritual force he mustered and drawn out against that. The instructions which Samuel gave to Israel, when they were lamenting after

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after the Lord, are observable to this purpose, I Sam. vii. 3. " If ye do return to the Lord with all "your hearts," and would be accepted of him therein, "then put away the strange god's and Asstraroth." Was not Asstraroth one of the strange gods, or goddess? Yes: but that is particularly instanced in, because it had been a beloved idol, dearer than the rest, that especially must be put away. Thus, in our covenanting with God, we must engage against all sin, but in particular, against that which, by reason of the temper of our minds the constitution of our bodies, or the circumstances of our outward affairs, doth most easily beset us, and we are most prone to.

Knowest thou thine ownself, O my soul? If thou dost, thou knowest "thine own siekness, and thine own "fore," that is thine own iniquity: bring that hither, and slay it; 1:t not thine eye spare, neither do thou pity it. Hide it not, excuse it not, indent not for leave to reserve it, as Namaan did for his house of Rimmon: though it had been to thee as a right eye, as a right hand, as thy guide and thine acquaintance, it hath been a false guide, an ill acquaintance, pluck it out, cut it off, and cast it from thee. Now come and fortify thy resolutions in the strength of Christ against that: fetch in help from heaven against that; be vigorous in thy resistance of that and how many soever its advantages are against thee, yet despair not of a victory at last.

(4.) We must folemnly vow, That we will abstain from all appearance of evil; not only from that which is manifestly sin, and which earries the evidences of its own malignity written in its sorehead, but from that which looks like sin, and borders upon it. Wisdom is here profitable to direct, so as that we may not on the one hand indulge a scrupulous conscience, and yet on the other hand may preserve a tender conscience. Far be it from us to make that to be sin

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which God hath not made so; and yet in doubtful cases in must be our care and covenant to keep the safer side, and to be eautious of that which looks suspicious: "He that walks uprightly, walks surely." That which we have found to be either a snare to us, and an occasion of sin, or a blemish to us, and an occasion of scandal, or a terror to us in the reflection, and an occasion of grief or sear, it may do well expressly to resolve against, though we be not very clear that it is in itself sinful, nor dare censure it as an evil in others; provided that this vow be made with such limitations as that it may not afterwards prove an entanglement to us, when, either by the improvement of our knowledge, or the change of our circumstances, it ceaseth

to have in it an appearance of evil. The many said

And art thou willing (my foul) to come under this bond? Wilt thou put far from thee the accurfed thing? Wilt thou in this ordinance make a covenant with thine eyes and oblige them not to look on the wine when it is red; nor to look on a woman to luft after her; Wilt thou shun sin as the plague, and engage thyself, not only never to embrace that adultress. but never to come nigh the door of her house, Prov. v. 8. Thy vow being like that of the Nazarite, not to drink of this intoxicating wine; let it be then like his, not to cat any thing that cometh of the wine, "from the kernel to the husk," Numb. vi. 3, 4. Abandon fin and all its appurtenances; cast out Tobiah and all his fluff. Refolve to deny thyfelf in that which is most defirable, rather than give Satan any advantage; to abridge thyself even in that which is lawful, rather than come within the confines of fin, or bring thyfelf into danger of that which is unlawful; " happy is the man that feareth always.

(5-) We must solemnly vow, that we will have no fellowship "with the unstruitful works of darkness, "neither be partakers of other mens sins, Eph. v. 11.

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2 Tim. iv. 22. We live in a corrupt and degenerate age, in which iniquity greatly abounds: our business indeed is not to judge others, to their own masters they stand or fall, but our care must be, to preserve ourselves, and the purity and peace of our own minds: our covenant therefore must be, that we will never "walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the "way of sinners," Pfal. i. 1. When David engaged himself to keep the commandments of his God, pursuant to that engagement, he said to evil doers "demended his new converts of the necessity of this care, Acts ii. 40. "Save yourselves from this untoward ge-"neration."

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Let the Psalmist's vow be mine then, Psal. xxvi. 5. having hated the congregation of evil-doers, (fuch as drunkards, fwearers, filthy talkers, and fcoffers at godliness) "I will not fit with the wicked." Though I cannot avoid being sometimes in the fight and hearing of fuch, yet I will never take those for my chosen companions, and bosom friends in this world, with whom I should dread to have my portion in the other world. Religion in rags shall be always valued by me, and profanencis in robes despised. Having chosen God for my God, his people shall always be my people: "Lord, gather not my foul with finners." If thou art in good earnest for heaven, resolve to swime against the stream, and thou wilt find that sober singularity is an excellent guard to ferious piety. On all that glory let there be this defence.

Secondly, We must here, by a solemn vow, bind ourselves up to all duty. It is not enough that we depart from evil, but we must do good: it is not enough that we separate ourselves from the service of sin, and shake off Satan's iron yoke; but we must devote ourselves to the service of Christ, and put our necks under the sweet and easy yoke of God's com-

mandments,

mandments, with a folemn promise faithfully to draw in that yoke all our days. We need not bind our-felves to more than we are already bound to by the divine law, either expressly, or by consequence; either as primary duties, or secondary, in order to them. We are not called to lay upon ourselves any other burden than necessary things, and they are not heavy burdens, nor grievous to be borne: but we must bind ourselves faster, and by additional ties, to that which

we are already bound to.

is, We must, by a solemn vow, oblige ourselves to all the duties of religion in general. Jacob's vow must be ours, Gen. xxviii. 21. "Then the Lord shall be my God." Having avouched him for mine, I will sear him and love him, delight in him, and depend upon him, worship him, and glorify him, as my Lord and my God. Having owned him as mine, I will ever eye him as mine, and "walk in his name," Micah iv. 5. David's vows must be ours, that we will "keep "God's judgments," Psal. exix. 106. that we will keep in them as our way, keep to them as our rule; that we will keep them as the apple of our eye, keep them always unto the end.

In the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ, we

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must here solemnly promise and vow,

(1.) That we will make religion our business. It is our great business in this world to serve the honour of him that made us, and secure the happiness we are made for: this we must mind as our business, and not, as they most do, make a by-business of it. Religion must be our calling; the calling we resolve to live in, and hope to live by; in the services of it we must be constant and diligent, and as in our element. Other things must give way to it, and be made as much as may be serviceable to it. And this must be our covenant with God here, that however we have trifled hitherto, hence sorward we will mind religion as the one thing

thing needful, and not be flothful in the business of it, but servent in spirit serving the Lord. And art thou willing (my foul) thus to devote thyself entirely to the service of thy God? Shall that engage thy cares, fill thy thoughts, command thy time and give law to the whole man? Let this matter be settled then in this day's vows, and resolve to live and die by it.

(2.) That we will make conscience of inside godliness. Having in our covenant given God our heart, which is what he demands, we must resolve to employ it for him: for without doubt he is a Jew, he is a Christian that is one inward; and that is circumcision. that is baptism, that is true and pure religion, "which is of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the "letter," Rom. ii. 29. That we are really, what we are inwardly; and they only are the true worshippers, that worship God in the spirit. This is the power of godliness, without which the form is but a carcase, but a shadow. "The King's daughter is all glorious "within." This therefore we must resolve in the Arength of the grace of God, that we will keep our hearts with all diligence, keep them fixed, fixed upon God; that the defire of our fouls shall ever be towards God: that our hearts shall be lifted up to God in every prayer, and their doors and gates thrown open to admit his word; and that our contlant care shall be about the "hidden man of the heart, in that which "is not corruptible," fo approving ourfelves to God in our integrity in every thing we do in religion.

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(3.) That we will live a life of communion with God. Without controversy, great is this mystery of godliness; if there be a heaven upon earth, certainly this is it, by faith to set the Lord always before us, having an eye to him with suitable affections, as the irst cause and last end of all things that concerns us; and so having communion with him in providence as sell as ordinances. When we receive the common

comforts

comforts of every day from his hand with love and thankfulness; and bear the common crosses and disappointments of every day, as ordered by his will, with patience and submission; when we commit every day's care to him, and manage every day's business and converse for him having a constant habitual regard to God in the settled principles of the divine life, and frequent actual out-goings of soul towards him in pious ejaculations, the genuine expressions of devout affections; then we live a life of communion with God. Did we know by experience, what it is to live such a life as this, we would not exchange the pleasures of it for the pecular treasures of kings and provinces.

Engage thyself then, my soul, elevate thyself to this spiritual and divine life, and every day may be thus with thee a communion day, and thy constant sellowship may be with the stather, and with his Son Jesus Christ, by the Spirit. Let me resolve hencesorward to live, more than hitherto I have done, a life of complacency in God, in his beauty, bounty and benignity; a life of dependance upon God, upon his power, providence, and promise; a life of devotedness to God, to the command of his word, the conduct of his spirit, and the disposal of his providence; and thus to walk

with God in all holy conversation.

(4.) That we will keep heaven in our eye, and take up with nothing short of it. We are made for another world, and we must resolve to set our hearts upon that world, and have it always in our eye; seeking the things that are above, and slighting things below in comparison with them, as those that are born from heaven, and bound for heaven, Bind thyself, my soul, with this bond, that, "forgetting the things that are behind, as one that hath not yet attained, "neither is already persect," thou wilt reach forth to those things that are before, "pressing forwards to those things that are before, pressing forwards to those things that are before, he pressing forwards below the mark, for the prize of the high calling,"

13, 14. My treasure is in heaven, my heart, hope, and home are there; I shall never be well till I am there; there therefore shall my heart be, and to that recompense of reward I will ever have respect; with an eye to that joy and glory set before me in the other world, I will by the grace of God patiently run the race of godliness set before me in this world, Heb. xii. 1, 2.

2dly, We must, by a solemn vow, oblige ourselves to some duties of religion in particular. As it is good to engage ourselves by covenant against particular sins, that, by the help of resolution, our resistance of them may be invigorated; so it is good to engage ourselves to particular duties, that thereby we may be quickened closely and diligently to apply ourselves to

them, and may fee our work before us.

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(1.) We should particularly oblige ourselves to those duties which our own consciences have charged us with the neglect of. We have known that good which our own hearts tell us we have not done; we find, upon reflection, it may be, that we have not been constant in our secret devotion, that we have not done that good in our families which we should have done; we have been barren in good discourse, careless of our duty to the souls of others, backward to works of charity, unfurnished for, and indisposed to religious exercifes: in thefe, or other things, wherein we are conscious to ourselves that we have been defedive, we must covenant for the suture to be more circumfpect and industrious, that our works may be found filled up before God. When the Jews in Nehemiah's time made a fure covenant, wrote it, and fealed to it, they inferted particular articles, relating to those branches of God's service which had been neglected, and made ordinances for themselves, according to the ordinances that God had given them, Neh. x. 32. to should we do, as an evidence of the fincerity, of our our repentance for our former omissions, both of duty, and in duty. That work of our Lord, wherein we have been most wanting, in that we must covenant to abound most, that thereby we may redeem the time.

(2.) We should particularly oblige ourselves to those duties which we have found by experience to contribute most to the support and advancement of the life and power of godliness in our hearts. They that have carefully observed themselves, perhaps can tell what those religious exercises are which they have found to be most ferviceable to the prosperity of their fouls, and by which they have reaped most spiritual benefit and advantage. Have our hearts been most enlarged in fecret devotion? Hath God fometimes met us in our closets with special comforts, and the unusual manifestations of himself to our souls? Let us from thence take an indication, and covenant to be more and longer alone in fecret communion with God. Have public ordinances been to us as green pastures. and have we fitten down by them with delight? Let us refolve to be fo much the more diligent in our attendance on them, and wait more closely at those gates where we have fo often been abundantly fatisfied. Though one duty must never be allowed to entrench upon another, yet those duties which we have found to be the most effectual means of increasing our acquaintance with God, confirming our faith in Christ, and furthering us in our way to heaven, we should, with a pecular care, engage ourselves to.

Thou God hath strictly commanded us the great and necessary acts of religious worship, yet, for the trial of our holy ingenuity and zeal, he hath lest it to us to determine many of the circumstances; that even instituted facrifices may be in some respects free will offerings: he hath commanded us to pray and read the scriptures, but hath not told us just how oft and how long we must pray and read; here therefore it is

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proper for us to bind ourselves to that which will best answer the intention of the command in general, best agree with the circumstances we are in, and best advance the interests of our fouls: in which we must take heed on the one hand, that we indulge not spiritual floth, by contenting ourselves with the least proportions of time that may be, much less by confining ourselves, to them; and, on the other hand, that we make not religious exercifes a task and burden to ourselves, by binding ourselves to that at all times, which, in an extraordinary pang of devotion, is eafy and little enough. In making refolutions of this kind, we ought to be eautious, and not hafty to utter any thing before God, that we may not afterwards fay before the angel, "It was an error," Eccl. v. 2. 6. Though fuch is the decay of Christian zeal in the age that we live in, that few need this caution, yet it must be inferted, because "it is a snare to a man to devour "that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry.

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(3.) We should particularly oblige ourselves to those duties by which we have opportunity of glorifying God, adorning our profession, and doing good in our places. We are not born for ourselves, nor bought for ourselves, we are born for God. and bought for Christ; and both as men, and as Christians, we are members one of another, and we ought to fit down and confider how we may trade with the talent we are intrusted with, though it be but one, to the glory of our Creator; the honour of our Redeemer, and the good of our brethren. The liberal and pious deviseth liberal things and pious things, and oblige themselves to them. Think then, my foul, not only what must I do, but what may I do for God, who hath done such great things for me? How may I be serviceable to the interests of God's kingdom among men? What can I do to promote the strength and beauty of the church, and the welfare of precious fouls? And if we T 2 have

have thought of any thing of this kind, that falls within the fphere of our activity, though but a low and narrow fphere, it may do well when we find ourfelves in a good frame at the table of the Lord, by a rolemn vow, with due caution to oblige ourselves to it, that we may not leave room for a treacherous heart to flart back. Thus Jacob, for the perpetuating the memory of God's favour to him, made it a part of his vow, Gen. xxviii. 22. "This stone which I have set " for a pillar, shall be God's house." Thus Hannah vowed, that, if God would give her a fon, she would give him to the Lord, I Sam, i. 11. It is one of the rules prescribed concerning cost or pains bestowed for pious and charitable uses, 2 Cor. xi. 7. "Every man " according as he purpofeth in his heart, fo let him " give fo let him do:" Now, left, that purpose should fail, and come to nothing, it is good, when the matter of it is well digested, to bring it to a head in a folemn promife, that the tempter feeing us ftedfafily refolved, he may cease foliciting us to alter our purpose.

(4.) We should particularly oblige ourselves to the duties of our respective callings and relations. Much of Christian obedience lies in these instances; and in them we are especially called to serve God and our generation, and should therefore bind ourselves to do so.

They that are in places of public trust and power, should here oblige themselves by a solemn vow to be saithful to the trust reposed in them, and to use their power for the public good. They that rule over men, must here covenant that they will be just, ruling in the sear of God. Their oath's must here be ratisfied, and David's promise must be theirs, Psal. lxxv. 2. "When I shall receive the congregation, I will judge "uprightly." This ought to be seriously considered by all those who receive this holy sacrament at their admission into the magistracy. When publicans and soldiers submitted to the baptism of John, and thereby obliged

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obliged themselves to live a holy life, they asked and received of John instructions how to discharge the duty of their respective employments, Luke iii. 12, 13, 14. for when we vow to keep God's commandments, though we must have an universal respect to them all, yet we must have a special regard to these precepts which relate to the calling wherein we are called, whatever it is.

The stewards of the mysteries of God, when they administer this ordinance to others, receive it themselves as an obligation upon them to stir up the gist that is in them, that they may make sull proof of their ministry. Their ordination vows are repeated and confirmed in every sacrament, and they are again sworn to be true to Christ and souls. He that ministreth about holy things, must here oblige himself to wait on his ministring; he that teacheth, on teaching and he that exhorteth, on exhortation," Rom.

xii. 7. 8.

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Governors of families must here oblige themselves, as David did, to walk before their houses in a perfect way, with a perfect heart: and must affix this seal to Joshua's resolution, that, whatever others do, "they "and their houses will serve the Lord," Pial. ci. 2. John xxiv. 15. Here they must confecrate to God a church in their house, and bind themselves to set up, and always to keep up, both an altar and a throne for God in their habitation, that they may approve themfelves the spiritual feed of faithful Abraham, who was famous for family-religion. It is with this intent, I sappose, that the rubric of the public establishment declares it convenient, "That new married persons. "flould receive the holy communion at the time of their "marriage, or at the first opportunity after their "marriage;" that, being engaged to each other in a new relation, they may folemnly engage themselves to discharge the duties of that relation in the sear of God.

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And inferior relations must here oblige themselves to do the duty they owe to their superiors; children to be dutiful to their parents, servants to be obedient to their masters; yea, all of us to be subject one to enother. They that are under the yoke, as the Apostle speaks, I Tim. vi. 1. I may here make the yoke they are under easy to them, by obliging themselves to draw in it from a principle of duty to God, and gratitude to Christ, which will both sanctify and

weeten the hardest services and submission.

Whatever our employments are, and our dealings with men, we must here promise and avow, that we will be firictly just and honest in them; that, whatever temptations we may be under to the contrary at any time, we will make conscience of "rendering to " all their due, and of speaking the truth from the "heart; that we will walk uprightly, and work righte-" outness, despite the gain of oppression, and shake our " hand from holding of bribes," knowing that they who do fo, " shall dwell on high, their place of de-" fence shall be the munition of rocks, bread shall be "given them, and their waters shall be fure," Ifa. exxiii. 15, 16. We find it upon record, to the honour of Christ's holy religion, when it was first planted in the world, that Pliny, a heathen magistrate, and a persecutor of Christianity, giving an account to the emperor Trajan, of what he had discovered concerns ing the Christians, in an epistle yet extant, acknowledgeth, that in their religious affemblies they bound themselves by a sacrament, it is the very word he uses, Non in scelus aliquod, sed ne furta, me latrocinia, ne as dulteria committerent; ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent: That is, They bound themselves not to do any thing, but that they would not rob or steal, or commit adultery; that they would never be falle to any true reposed in them, never deny any thing that was put into their hands to keep; and the

Tike. The same is still the true intent and meaning of this fervice: it is the bond of a covenant, added to the bond of a command, That we'" do justly, love

mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

Come then, my foul, come under those bonds, come willingly and chearfully under them; he that bears an honest mind, doth not startle at assurances: be not afraid to promife that which thou art already bound to do; for these vows will rather facilitate thy duty. than add to the difficulty of it; the faster thou findest thyfelf fixed to that which is good, the less there will be of uneasy hesitation and wavering concerning it,

and the less danger of being tempted from it.

Only remember, that all those vows must be made with an entire dependance upon the strength and grace of Jesus Christ, to enable us to make them good. We have a great deal of reason to distrust ourselves, so weak, and treacherous are our hearts: Peter betrayed himself by confiding in himself, when he said, "Though "I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee:" but we have encouragement enough to trust in Christ; in his name therefore let us make our vows, in this grace let us be strong; surely "in the Lord alone "have we righteoutuefs and strength;" he is the furety of the covenant for both parties; into his cuftody therefore, and under the protection of his grace. let us pour out our fouls, and we shall find he is able to keep what we commit to him.

## CHAP. XII.

Directions concerning the Frame of our Spirits when we come away from this Ordinance.

HEY that have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, at the table of the Lord

Lord, whose hearts are enlarged to fend forth the workings of prous and devout affections towards God, and to take in the communication of divine light, life, and love from him, cannot but fay, as Peter did upon the holy mount, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: " here let us make tabernacles." They fit down under the refreshing shadow of this ordinance with delight, and its fruit is sweet unto their taffe: Here they could dwell all the days of their life, beholding the beauty of the Lord, and inquiring in his temple: But it is not a continual feast; we must come down from this mountain; these sweet and precious minutes are foon numbered and finished; supper is ended, thanks are returned, the guests are difmissed with a bleffing; the hymn is fung, and we go out to the mount of Olives; even in this Jerusalem, the city of our solemnites, we have not a continuing city: Jacob hath an opportunity of wrestling with the Angel a while, but he must "let him go, for the day breaks," Gen. xxxii. 26. and he hath a family to look after, a journey to profecute, and the affairs thereof call for his attendance. We must not be always at the Lord's table; the high priest himself must not be always within the vail, he must go out again to the people when his fervice is performed; now, it ought to be as much our care to return in a right manner from the ordinance; as to approach in a right manner to the ordinance. That caution is here needful, 2 John i. 8. " Look to " yourselves, that we loose not those things which we " have wrought, -which we have gained,"-fo fome read it. Have we in this ordinance wrought any thing, or gained any thing that is good; we are concerned to fee to it, that we do not undo what we have wrought, and let flip what we have gained. When the folemnity is done, our work is not done,-still we must be pressing forwards in our duty. This perhaps is the mystery of that law in Ezekiel's temple fervice, Ezek. xlvi. 9.

that they should not return from worshipping before the Lord in the solemn feasts "through the same gate "by which they entered in, but by that over against it." Forgetting those things which are behind, still we must reach forth to those things which are before.

Let us inquire then, what is to be done at our coming away from the ordinance, for the preferving and

improving of the impressions of it?

First, We should come from this ordinance, admiring the condescensions of the divine grace to us. Great are the honours which have here been done us, and the favours which here we have been admitted to: the God that made us hath taken us into covenant and communion with himself, the King of kings hath entertained us at his table, and there we have been seasted with the dainties of heaven, abundantly satisfied with the goodness of his house; exceeding great and precious promises hath been here sealed to us, and carness given us of the eternal inheritance: now, if we know ourselves, this cannot but be the matter of our wonder, our joyful, and yet awful wonder.

(1.) Confidering our meanness by nature, we have reason to wonder, that the great God should thus advance us. Higher than heaven is above the earth, is God above us; between heaven and earth there is, though a vast, yet only a finite distance; but, between God and man there is an infinite disproportion. "What "is man then? (man that is a worm, and the fon of " man that is a worm,) that he should be thus visited " and regarded: thus dignified and prefered? That " favour done to Ifrael founds great," Pfal. lxxviii. 24. " Man did eat angels food;" but here man is feafted with that which was never angels food, the "flesh and " blood of the Son of man," which gives life to the Soloman himself stood amazed at God's condescending to take possession of that magnificent temple he had built, 2 Chron. 6. 18. "But will God in

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" very deed dwell with men on the earth?" And which is more, shall men on the earth dwell in God. and make the most high their habitation? If great men look with respect upon those that are much their inferior, it is because they expect to receive honour and advantage by them; but, "Can a man be profit-" able unto God?" No. he cannot : "Our goodness " extendeth not unto him." He was from eternity happy without us, and would have been fo to eternity. if we had never been, or had been miserable: but we are undone, undone for ever, if his goodness extend not to us, he needs not our fervices, but we need his favours; men adopt because they are childless, but God adopts us purely because we are fatherless. It was no excellency in us that recommended us to his love, but poverty and mifery made us proper objects of his Dity

Come then, my foul, and compose thyself, as king David did, when having received a gracious message from heaven, affuring him of God's kind intentions to him and his family, he went in, and, with a great fixedness of mind, fat before the Lord; and fay, as he faid, "Who am I. O Lord God? and what is my " house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" That I should be so kindly invited to the table of the Lord, and fo fplendidly treated there? That one fo mean and worthless as I am, the poorest daughill worm that ever called God father, should be placed among the ehildren, and fed with the children's bread? And yet, as if this were a "fmall thing in thy fight, O Lord "God, thou hast spoken also concerning thy fervant " for a great while to come," even as far as eternity itself reaches; and thus "thou hast regarded me ac-"cording to the estate of a man of high degree," though I am nothing, yea less than nothing and vanity; " And is this the manner of men, O Lord God?" Could men expect thus to be favoured? No, but thou givest givest to men, not according to their poverty, but according to thy riches in glory. Do great men use to condescend thus? No, it is usual with them to take state upon them, and to oblige their inferiors to keep their distance; but we have to do with one that is God, and not man, whose thoughts of love are as much above ours, as his thoughts, of wisdom are; and therefore, as it follows there, "What can David say more "unto thee?" What account can I give of this unaccountable savour? "It is for thy words sake, and "according to thine own heart," for the performance of thy purposes and promises, that "thou hast done all these great things, to make thy servant know them," 2 sam. vii. 18. 21. I Chron. xvii. 16. &c.

(2.) Confidering our vileness by fin, we have yet more reason to wonder that the holy God should thus favour us. We are, not only worms of the earth, below his cognizance, but a generation of vipers, obnoxious to his curfe; not only unworthy of his love and favour, but worthy of his wrath and difpleasure: How is it then, that we are brought fo near unto him, who deserved to have been sentenced to an eternal separation from him? He hath faid, " The foolish shall not "fland in his fight," Pfal. v. 5. Foolish we know we are, and yet we are called to fit at his table, being through Christ reconciled to him, and brought into covenant with him. Justice might have fet us as criminals at his bar; but, behold, mercy fets us as children at his board; and it is a miracle of mercy. mercy that is the wonder of angels, and will be the eternal transport of glorified faints. See how much we owe to the Redeemer, by whom we have access into this grace.

Let me therefore fet myfelf, and stir up myfelf, to admire it: I have much more reason to say than Mephibosheth had, when David took him to eat bread at his table continually, 2 Sam. ix. 8. "What is thy ser-

" vant, that thou fhouldst look upon such a dead dog "as I am?" I am less than the least of God's mercies, and yet he hath not with-held the greatest from me; I have forfeited the comforts of my own table, and yet I am feasted with the comforts of the Lord's table? I deserve to have had the cup of the Lord's indignation put into my hand, and to have drunk the dregs of it. but behold. I have been treated with the cup of falvation. Were ever traitors made favourites? fuch traitors made such favourites? Who can sufficiently admire the love of the Redeemer, who "received gifts " for men, yea, even for the rebellious alfo," upon their return to their allegiance, "that the Lord God " might dwell among them?" Pfal-lxviii. 18. And have I shared in these gifts, nowithstanding my rebellions? This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous: Whence is this to me, that not the mother of my Lord but my Lord himself, should come to me? That he should thus prevent me, thus distinguish me, with his favours? "Lord how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to me, and not unto the world?"

Secondly, We should come from this ordinance lamenting our own manifold defects and infirmities in our attendance upon God in it. When we look back upon the folemnity, we find, that, as we cannot speak well enough of God and of his grace, so we cannot speak ill enough of ourselves, and of the folly and treachery of our own hearts. Now, conscience thou art charged in God's name to do thine office, and to accomplish a diligent search? review the workings of the soul in this ordinance distinctly and impartially.

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And, (1.) If upon fearch thou findest cause to suspect that all hath been done in hypocrify, then set thy soul a trembling; for its condition is sad, and highly dangerous. If I have been here pretending to join myself in a covenant with God, while I continue in league with the world and the stell? pretending to receive

receive the pardon of my fins, when I never repented of them, nor defigned to forfake them; I have but deceived myself, and have reason to fear that I shall perish at last with a lie in my right hand. While this conviction is fresh and sensible, let care be taken to mend the matter; and, bleffed be God, it may be mended. Have I reason to fear that my heart is not right in the fight of God, and that therefore I have no lot nor part in the matter, but am in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity? I must then take the advice which Peter gave to Simon Magus, when he perceived that to be his condition; after he had received the facrament of baptism, Acts viii. 21, 22. 23. "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray "God, if perhaps the thoughts of thine heart may be "forgiven thee." Let that be done with a double care after the ordinance which should have been done before.

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But (2.) If upon fearch thou findest that there hath been, through grace, truth in the inward part; yet fet thy foul a blushing, for it hath not been cleanfed. according to the purification of the fanctuary. When we would do good, evil is present with us: our wine is mixed with water, and our gold with drofs: and who is there that "doth good, and finneth not," even in his doing good? We find, by fad experience, that the fons of God never come together, but Satan comes also among them, and stands at their right hand to refift them: and that wherever we go, we carry about with us the remainders of corruption, a body of death, which inclines to that which is evil, and indifpofes us to that which is good. If the spirit be willing, yet alas, the flesh is weak, and we cannot do the things that we would.

O what reason have I to be ashamed of myself, and blush to lift up my sace before God, when I review the frame of my heart during my attendance on this ordinance! How short have I come of doing my duty according

according as the work of the day required? My thoughts should have been fixed, and the subjects prefented to them to fix upon were curious enough to engage them, and copious enough to employ them: and yet they went with the fool's eyes, unto the end of the earth, and wandered after a thousand impertinencies. A little thing ferved to give them a diversion from the contemplation of the great things fet before me. My affections should have been raised and elevated, but they were low and flat and little moved: if fometimes they feemed to foar upwards, yet they foon fank down again, and the things which remained were ready to die. My defires were cold and indifferent, my faith weak and unactive; nor were there any workings of foul in me proportionable to the weightiness of the transaction. Through my own dulness, and deadness, and inadvertency, I lost a deal of time out of a little; and flept much of that which might have been done and got there, If I had been close and diligent.

This thought forbids us to entertain a good conceit of ourselves, and our own performances, or to build any considence upon our own merit. While we are conscious to ourselves of so much infirmity cleaving to our best services, we must acknowledge that boasting is for ever excluded; we have nothing to glory of before God, nor can we challenge a reward as of debt, but must ascribe all to free grace. What good there is in us, is all of God, and he must have the honour of it; but there is also much amiss, which is all of ourselves; and we must take the shame of it, lamenting those sad effects of the remainder of sin in us, which we feel to our loss when we draw nigh to God in holy ordinances.

This thought obligeth us likewife to rely on Christ alone, for acceptance with God in all our religious duties: he is that great and gracious high Priest, who bears the iniquity of the hely things, which the children

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"children of Israel hallow in their holy gifts, that, "notwithstanding that iniquity which it is repented of, "the gifts may be accepted before the Lord," Exod. xxviii. 38. "Of his righteousness therefore we must "make mention, even of his only; for the most spi"ritual facrifices are acceptable to God, only through

" him." I Pet ii. 5.

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Thirdly. We should come from this ordinance rejoicing in Jesus Christ, and in that great love wherewith he hath loved us. From this feast we flould go to our tents, as the people went from Solomon's featt of dedication, "joyful and glad in heart, for all the " goodness that the Lord hath done by David his fer-"vant, for Ifrael his people," I Kings viii. 66. They that went forth weeping, must come back rejoicing, as they have cause, if they "bring their sheaves with "them," Pfal. exxvi. 5, 6. Hath God here lifted up the light of his countenance upon us; that should " put gladness into our hearts," Pfal. iv. 6, 7. Have we here lifted up our fouls to God, and joined ourfelves to him in an everlafting covenant? We have reason with the baptized Eunuch, to "go on our way " rejoicing," Acts viii. 39. The day of our espoufals should be the day "of the gladness of our hearts," Cant. iii. 11. This cup of bleffing was defigned to be a cup of confolation, and its wine ordained to make glad man's heart, to made glad the heart of the new man: having therefore drunk of this cup, let our fouls " make their boast in the Lord, and sing in his ways, " and call him their exceeding joy."

Let this holy joy give check to carnal mirth: for having feen so much reason to rejoice in Christ Jesus: we deceive ourselves, if we rejoice in a thing of nought: we are not sorbidden to rejoice, but our joy must be turned into the right channel, and our mirth sanctified, which will suppress and silence the laughter that is mad. The trothiness of a vain mind must be cured

by a religious chearfulness, as well as by a religious feriousness.

Let it give check also to the sorrow of the world, and that inordinate grief for outward crosses, which sinks the spirits, dries the bones, and worketh death. Why art thou cast down! and why disquieted for a light affliction, which is but for a moment? When even that is so far from doing thee any real prejudice, that it works for thee a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Learn, my soul, to sit down upon the ruins of all thy creature comforts, by a withered fig-tree, a fruitless vine, and a blasted crop, and even then to sing to the praise and glory of God, as the God of thy salvation. When thou art full, enjoy God in all; when thou art empty, enjoy all in God.

Let this holy joy express itself in praises to God,

and encouragement to ourselves.

(1.) Let it express itself in the thankful acknowledgment of the favours we have received from God. As spiritual joy must be the heart and soul of divine praise, so divine praise must be the breath and speech of spiritual joy. Whatever makes us joyful, must make us thankful: Do we come from this ordinance eafy and pleafant, and greatly refreshed with the goodness of God's house? Let the high praises of God then be in our mouths, and in our hearts. This is a proper time for us to be engaged with great fixedness, and enlarged with great fluency in this fervice. If we must give thanks for the mercies we receive, at our own table, which relate only to a perishing body, and a dying life, much more ought we to give thanks for the mercies we receive at God's table, which relate to an immortal foul, and eternal life. "When thou haft " eaten, and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord "thy God, for the good land which he hath given "thee," Duet viii. 10. Bless him for a Canaan on earth, a land of light, and a valley of vision, in which God

God is known, and his name great; and for the comfortable lot thou halt in that land a name among God's people, and a nail in his holy place, a portion in Emmanuel's land; bless him for a Canaan in heaven which he hath given thee the promise and prospect of, that land flowing with milk and honey. Rejoice in

hope of that, and fing in hope.

"Blefs the Lord, O my toul, and let all that is "within thee," all thy thoughts, and all thy powers be employed in bleffing his holy name: and all little enough. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good. good to all, good to Ifrael, good to me. "I will men-"tion the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the " praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord. " hath bestowed on us," &c. Isa. lxiii. 7. Give glory to the exalted Redeemer, and mention to his praise the great things he hath done for us. "Worthy is "the Lamb that was flain," to take the book, and open the feals: worthy to wear the crown, and fway the feeptre for ever, worthy to receive bleffing, and honour and glory; worthy to be adored by the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just menmade perfect; worthy to be attended with the constant praifes of the universal church; worthy of the innermost and uppermost place of my heart, of the best affections I can confecrate to his praife, and the best fervices I can do to his name: for he was slain, and hath "redeemed us to God by his blood; and hath " made us to our God kings and priefts. He hath. "loved us, and washed us from our fins in his own; "blood;" a note of praise, which the angels themfelves cannot fing, though they have many a fong that we are strangers to. "He loved me, and give himself "for me," to fatisfy for my fin, and to obtain eternal redemption for me. Bleffed, and for ever bleffed, be the great and holy name of the Lord Jefus, that name: which is as ointment poured forth, that name which

is above every name, which is worthy of, and yet

"exalted far above every blelling and praise."

And, whenever we confeis that Jefus Christ is Lord, let it always be done to the glory of God the Father, Phil. ii. 11. His kindness and love to men was the original fpring, and first wheel in the work of our redemption. It was he that "gave his only begotten Son, delivered him up for us all, and who was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself:" glory therefore, eternal glory be unto God in the highest: for in Christ there is on earth eternal peace and goodwill towards men. God hath in Christ glorified himfelf. we must therefore in Christ glorify him, and make all our joys, and praifes to centre in him. In the day of our rejoicing this must be the burden of all our fongs, Bleffed be God for Jesus Christ; thanks be unto God for this unspeakable gift, the foundation of all other gifts.

(2.) Let this holy joy speak encouragement to ourfelves, chearfully to proceed in our Christian course. The comfort we have had in our covenant-relation to God, and interest in Christ, should put a sweetness into all our enjoyments, and fanctify them to us. We must see the love of God in them, and taste that he is gracious, and this must make them comforts indeed to us; fee the curse removed from them, fee a bleffing going along with them, and then, " Go thy way, eat " thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry "heart for God now accepteth thy works," Eccl. ix: 7. Have we good ground to hope, that through grace our works are accepted of God? If we fincerely aim at God's acceptance, make that our end, and labour for it, with an eye to Christ as Mediator, we may lrope that our perfons and performances are accepted: if we accept God's works, accept the disposals of his providence, we and the offers of his grace, with a humble acquiescence in both, that will be a good evidence that

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that he accepts our works. And if so, we have reason to rejoice with joy unspeakable and sull of glory. "Eat "thy bread with joy," for it is thy father's gift, the bread wherewith the Lord thy God seeds thee in this wilderness, through which he is leading thee to the land of promise; "Drink thy wine with a merry heart," remembring Christ's love more than wine: what thou hast thou mean and scanty, thou hast it with the blessing of God, which will make the little thou hast, "bet"ter than the riches of many wicked," Psal. xxxvii. 16.

Rejoice in the Lord now, O my foul, rejoice in him always: having kept this feaft with gladness, (as Hezekiah and his people did, 2 Chron. xxx. 23.) carry with thee some of the comforts of God's table to thine own, and there eat thy meat with gladness, as those primitive Christians did, Acts ii. 46. Live a life of holy chearfulness, and the joy of the Lord will be thy

strength.

Fourthly, We should come from this ordinance much quickened to every good work. Seeing ourfelves compassed about here with so great a cloud of witnesses, bound by so many engagements, invited by fo many encouragements, and obliged to God and godliness by so many ties of duty, interest and gratitude; let us "lay afide every weight, and the fin that most "eafily befets us," whatever it is, especially the evil. heart of unbelief, which is our great hindrance, and " let us run with patience the race that is fet before "us, looking unto Jesus," Heb. xii. 1; 2. Let the covenant we have renewed, and the comforts we have received, make us more ready to every good duty, and more lively in it; more active and zealous for the glory of God, the fervice of our generation, and the welfare and prosperity of our own fouls. From what we have feen and done here we may fetch powerful confiderations to shame us out of our flothfulness, and our backwardness to that which is good, and to ffir us up to the utmost diligence in our master's work.

When

When Jacob had received a gracious visit from God, and had made a solemn vow to him, Gen. xxxvisi. 12, 20. it follows, chap. xxix. 1. "Then Jacob went "on his way." The original phrase is observable. "Then Jacob lift up his seet." After that comfortable night he had at Bethel, knowing himself to be in the way of his duty, he proceeded with a great deal of chearfulness; that strengthened the weak hands, and confirmed the feeble knees: Thus should our communion with God in the Lord's Supper enlarge our hearts to run the way of God's commandments: After such an ordinance, we should lift up our feet in the way of God, that is, (as it is said of Jehoshaphet, 2 Chron. xvii. 6.) We should lift up our hearts in those ways, abiding and abounding in the work of the Lord:

Rouze up thyfelf now, my foul, from thy fpiritual flumber : up, and be doing, for the Lord is with thee, Awake, awake, put on thy ftrength, put forth thy strength, that thou mayst pull on thy holy war, thy hely work with vigour: flake thyfelf from the duft, to which thou hast too much cleaved: loofe thyself. from the bands of thy neck, with which thou hast been too much elogged, Ifa. ii. 1, 2. Meditate more fixedly, pray more earneftly, refift fin more resolutely, keep fabbaths more chearfully, do good more readily. Thou haft heard the found of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, plain indications of the presence of God with thee, therefore now thou flialt bestir thyself, 2 Sam. v. 24. Let the comforts of this ordinance employ thy wings, that thou mayft foar upwards, upwards towards God, let them oil thy wheels, that thou mayst press forwards, forwards towards heaven: Let God's gifts to thee stir up his gifts in thee.

Fifthly, We should come from this ordinance with a watchful sear of Satan's wiles, and a firm resolution to stand our ground against them. Whatever comfort and enlargement we have had in this ordinance, still

we must remember, that we are but girding on the harness, and therefore we have no reason to boast, or be secure, as though we have put it off. When we return to the world again, we must remember that we go among snares, and most provide accordingly: It is our wildom so to do.

(1.) Let us therefore fear. He that travels with a rich treasure about him, is in most danger of being fet upon, and is most afraid of being robbed. The ship that is richly laden is the pyrate's prize. If we come away from the Lord's table replenished with the goodness of God's house, and the riches of his covenant, we must expect the assaults of our spiritual enemies, and not be fecure. A strong guard was constantly kept upon the temple, and there needs one upon the living temples. The mystical fong represents the bed which is Solomon's thus furrounded by valiant men, of the valiant of Irael, "because of sear in the " night," Cant. iii. 7, 8. The Holy Ghoft thus fignifying, that believers in this world are in a military flate, and the followers of Christ must be his foldiers. They that work the good work of faith, must fight the good fight of faith.

We must always stand upon our guard, for the goodman of the house knows not at what hour the thies will come; but this we know, that immediately after our Saviour was baptized, and owned by a voice from heaven, he "was led into the wilderness to be tempted "of the devil," Matth. iv. 1. And immediately after he had administred the Lord's Supper to his disciples, he told them plainly, "Satan hath desired to "have you, (he hath challenged you) that he may sist "you as wheat," Luke xxii. 31. and what he said to them, he saith to all, "Watch and pray that ye enter "not into temptation," Matth. xxvi. 41. We must then double our guard against temptations to rash anger, and study to be more than ordinarly meek and quiet lest, by the tumults and transports of passion, the Holy Spirit be tempted to withdraw. If we have in this ordinance received Christ Jesus the Lord, let a strict charge be given, like that of the spouse, "By "the roes and by the hinds of the field, that nothing be said, nothing done to stir up or awake our love until he please," Cant. ii. 7. Peace being spoken, peace made, let us be asraid of every thing that may give disturbance to it. We should also watch against the inroads of worldly cares and sears, lest they make a descent upon us after a sacrament, and spoil us of the comforts we have there received.

But with a particular care we must watch against the workings of spiritual pride, after a facrament. When our Lord Jefus first instituted this ordinance, and made his disciples partakers of it, they were so elevated with the honour of it, that, not content to be all thus great, a contest immediately rose among them, which of them should be greatest. Luke xxii. 24. And when St Paul had been in the third heavens, he was in danger of being "exalted above measure with the " abundance of the revelations," 2 Cor. xii. 7. therefore have cause to sear lest this dead fly spoil all our precious ointment, and to keep a very firich and jealous eye upon our own hearts, that they be not lifted up with pride, " left we fall into the condemna-"tion of the devil," I Tim. iii. 6. Let us dread the first risings of self conceit, and suppress them; for, "What have we that we have not received? And, if " we have received it, why then do we boaft," I Cor. iv. 7.

(2.) Let us therefore fix; and let our hearts be established with the grace here received. What we have done in this ordinance, we must go away firmly resolved to abide by all our days. I am now fixed, immoveably fixed for Christ and holiness, against sin and Satan: The matter is settled, never to be called

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in question again, "I will ferve the Lord." The bargain is firuck, the knot is tied, the debate is come up to a final refolve; and here I fix, as one ftedfaftly refolved, with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord. No room is left to parley with a temptation; I am a Christian, a confirmed Christian, and, by the grace of God, a Christian I will live and die; and therefore, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto "me." My resolutions, in which before I wavered. and was unsteady, are now come to an head, and are as a nail in a fure place: I am now at a point; "I " have opened my mouth into the Lord, and I cannot "go back," Judges xi. 35. and therefore, by the grace of God, I am determined to go forward, and not fo much as look back, or wish from a discharge from those engagements. "I have chosen the way of truth," and therefore, in thy strength, Lord, "I will stick to "thy testimonies," Psal. cxix. 30, 31. Now my foot stands in an even place, well shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. I am now, like a strong man refreshed with wine, resolved to resist the devil, that he may fly from me, and never yield to him.

Sixtbly, We should come from this ordinance praying; lifting up our hearts to God in ejaculatory petitions; and retiring, as soon as may be, for solemn prayer. Not only before, and in the duty, but after it we have occasion to offer up our desire to God, and

fetch in strength and grace from him.

Two things we should be humbly earnest with God in prayer for, after this solemnity, and we are surnished from the mouth of holy David with every emphatical and expressive petitions for them both: We may therefore take with us these words in addressing to God,

(1.) We must pray, that God will fulfill to us those promises which he was graciously pleased to seal to us in this ordinance. David's prayer for this is, I Chron.

xvii. 23. " Now, Lord, let the thing that thou haft " fpoken concerning thy fervant, and concerning his house, be established for ever, and do as thou hast " faid." God's promifes in the word are designed to be our pleas in prayer; and we receive the grace of God in them in vain, if we do not make that use of them, and fue out the benefits conveyed and fecured by them. These are talents to be traded with, and improved as the guide of our defires, and the ground of our faith in prayer, and we must not hide them in a napkin. Having here taken hold of the covenant, thus we must take hold on God for covenant mercies. "Lord " remember the word unto thy fervant, upon which "thou hast caused me to hope," Psal. exix. 49. Thou hast not only given me the word to hope in, but the heart to hope in it: It is a hope of thy own raising, and thou wilt not destroy, by a disappointment, the work of thy own hands.

Come therefore, O my foul, come order thy cause before him, and fill thy mouth with arguments. Lord, is not this the word which thou hast spoken? " Sin shall not have dominion over you; the God of " peace shall tread Satan under your feet: There " shall no temptation take you, but such as is com-" mon to men, and the faithful God will never fuffer " you to be tempted above what you are able." Lord, be it unto thy fervant according to these words? Is not this the word, which thou hast spoken? " That " all things shall work for good to them that love " thee; that thou wilt be to them a God all-fufficient, " their shield, and their exceeding great reward, that "thou wilt give them grace and glory and with-hold " no good thing from them; that thou wilt never fail "them nor forfake them:" Now, Lord, let those words which thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, (and many other the like) be established for ever, and do as thou hast faid; for they are the words upon which thou hast caused me to hope. (2.) We

(2.) We must pray. That he will enable us to fulfil these promises which we have made to him in this ordinance. David's prayer for this is, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. "O Lord God of Abraham Isaac, and of Israel " our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of " the thoughts of the hearts of thy people, and pre-" pare, or confirm their hearts unto thee." Have there been some good affections, good desires, and good refolutions in the imagination of the thoughts of our hearts at this ordinance, fome good impressions made upon us, and some good expressions drawn from us by it? We cannot but be fensible how apt we are to lofe the good we have wrought, and therefore it is our wisdom by prayer to commit the keeping of it to God, and earnestly to beg of him effectual grace thoroughly to furnish us for every good word and work, and thoroughly to fortify us against every evil word and We made our promifes in the firength of the grace of God, that strength we must therefore pray for, that we may be able to make good our promifes. Lord maintain thine own interest in my foul; let thy name be ever hallowed there, thy kingdom come, and thy will be done in my heart, as it is done in heaven.

When we come away from this ordinance, we return to a cooling tempting, distracting world; as when Moses came down from the mount, where he had been with God, he sound the camp of Israel dancing upon the golden calf, to his great disturbance, Exodoxxxii. 19. In the midst of such forrows, and such snares as we are compassed about with here, we shall find it no easy matter to preserve the peace and grace which we hope we have obtained at the Lord's table; we must therefore put ourselves under the divine protection. Methinks it was with an affecting air of tenderness, that Christ said concerning his disciples, when he was scaving them, John xvii. 11. "Now I am no more in the world," the days of my tempta-

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they have their trial yet before them. What then shall I do for them; "Holy Father, keep through "thine own name those whom thou hast given me." That prayer of his was both the great example, and the great encouragement of our prayers. Now at the close of a sacrament, it is seasonable thus to address ourselves to God: I have not yet put off this body: I am not yet got clear of this world; yet I am a traveller exposed to thieves, yet I am a soldier exposed to enemies: Holy Father, keep through thine own name the graces and comforts thou hast given me; for they are thine. Mine own hands are not sufficient for me: O let thy grace be so, to preserve me to thy heavenly kingdom.

Immediately after the first administration of the Lord's Supper, our Saviour, when he had told Peter of Satan's design upon him, added this comfortable word, Luke xxii. 32. "I have prayed for thee, that "thy faith fail not;" and that is it which we must pray for, That this faith, which we think is so strong in the day of its advantage, may not prove weak in the day of its trial; For, as they who would have the benefit of the Spirit's operation, must strive for themfelves; so they that would have the benefit of the

Son's intercession, must pray for themselves.

Seventhly, We should come from this ordinance with a charitable disposition. Antiently the Christians had their love-seasts, or feasts of charity, annexed to the Eucharist; but what needed that, while the Eucharist itself is a love feast and a feast of charity? And furely that heart must be strangely hardened and sourced, that can go from under the softening sweetening powers of this ordinance in an uncharitable trame.

The servent charity which now we should have among ourselves must be a loving, giving, and forgiving charity. This it must have its perfect work.

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(1.) We must come from this ordinance with a difposition to love our fellow Christians. Here we see how dear they were to Christ, for he purchased them with his own blood; and from thence we may infer, how dear they ought to be to us, and how near they should ly to our hearts. Shall I look strangely upon them that have acquaintance with Christ? or be indifferent towards them that he has fo much concern for? No, we that are many, being one bread and one body; and having been all made to drink into one Spirit, my heart shall be more closely knit than ever to all the members of that one body, who are quickened and acted by that one Spirit. I have here beheld the beauty of the Lord, and therefore must love his image wherever I fee it on his fanctified ones. I have here joined myfelf to the Lord in an everlasting covenant, and thereby have joined myfelf in relation, and confequently in affection to all those who are in the bond of the same covenant. I have here bound myself to keep Christ's commandments, and this is his commandment, "That we love one another," and that brotherly love continue.

Those from whom we differ in the less weighty matters of the law, though we agree in the great things of God, we should now think of with particular thoughts of love and kindness, because from them our minds are most in temptation to be alienated; and those to whom we have given the right hand of sellowship in this and in other ordinances, we should likewise be mindful of with particular endearments, because of the particular relation we stand into them, as our more intimate companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. Yea, after such an ordinance as this, our catholic charity must be more warm and affectionate, more active, strong and stedsast, and more victorious over the difficulties and-oppositions it meets with; and, as the Aposse speaks, I Thes. iii. 12. we

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should "increase and abound in love one towards ano-"ther, and towards all men;" and in all the fruits and instances of that love.

(2.) We must come from this ordinance with a dispolition to give to the poor and necessitous, according as our ability and opportunity is. It is the laudable custom of the churches of Christ, to close the adminifiration of this ordinance with a collection for the poor : to which we ought to contribute our share not grudgingly, or of necessity, but with a fingle eye, and a willing mind, that our alms may be fanclified and accepted of God; and not only to this, but to all other acts of charity, we must be more sorward and free after a facrament. Though our Saviour lived upon alms himself, yet, out of the little he had, he gave alms to the poor, particularly at the feast of the passover. John xiii. 20. to fet us an example. Days of rejoicing and thankfgiving, (and fuch our facrament days are) used to be thus solemnized; for, when we "eat the fat, and drink the fweet ourselves, we must fend portions unto them for whom nothing is " prepared," Neh. viii. 10. that, when our fouls are bleffing God the loins of the power may blefs us. If our hearts have here been opened to Christ, we must evidence that they are so by our being open-handed to poor Christians: for, fince our goodness cannot extend to him, it is his will that it should extend to them, Pfal. xvi. 2, 3. If we have here in fincerity given ourselves to God, we have, with ourselves, devoted all we have to his fervice and honour, to be employed and laid out for him; and thus we must testify that we have heartily confented to that branch of the furrender: "As we have opportunity, we must do " good to all men, especially to them that are of the "houshold of faith: remembring that we are but " flewards of the manifold grace of God." If our prayers have here come up for a memorial before God

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God, as Cornelius's, our alms, like his, must accompany them, Acts x. 4. We have seen here how much we owe to God's pity and bounty towards us: Having therefore obtained mercy, we ought to shew mercy; knowing the grace of the Lord Jesus, "that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich," 2 Cor. viii. o. Read Ita. lviii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

(3.) We must come from this ordinance with a disposition to forgive those that have been provoking and injurious to us. Our approach to the sacrament made it necessary for us to forgive, but our attendance on it, should make it even natural for us to forgive; and our experience there is of God's mercy and grace to us, should conquer all the difficulty and reluctancy which we are conscious to ourselves of therein, and make it as easy to forgive our enemies as it is to forgive ourselves, when at any time we happen to have had a quarrel with ourselves.

That which makes it hard to forgive, and puts an edge upon our refentments, is the magnifying of the affronts we have received, and the loffes we have fustained: Now, in this ordinance, we have had honours put upon us sufficient to balance all those affronts, and benefits bestowed on us sufficient to countervail all those losses; so that we may well afford to forgive and forget both. With ourselves we have offered up to God our names, estates, and all our interests: in compliance therefore with the will of God (that God who bid Shimei curfe David, and who took away from Job that which the Sabcans and Chaldeans robbed him of) we must not only bear with patience the damage we fustain in those concerns, but must be charitably affected towards those that have been the instruments of that damage; knowing that men are in God's hand, Pfal. xvii. 14. and to his hand we must always Submit.

But the great argument for the forgiving of injuries. when we come from the table of the Lord, is taken from the pardons God hath in Christ there sealed to us. The jubilee trampet, which proclaimed releases, founded at the close of the day of atonement: Is God reconciled to us? Let us then be more firmly than ever reconciled to our brethren. Let the death of Christ, which we have here commemorated, not only flay all enmities, but take down all partition-walls: not only forbid revenge, but remove strangeness; and let all our feuds and quarrels be buried in his grave. Hath our master forgiven us that great debt, and a very great debt it was, and ought we not then to have compassion "on our fellow-fervants," Matth. xviii. 32, 33. Let us therefore, who have in this ordinance put on the Lord Jesus Christ, put on "as becomes the " elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies " and kindness, inclining us to forgive; humbleness of " mind and meekness," enabling us to conquer that pride and passion which object against our forgiving, that if any man have a quarrel against any, it may be passed by, as God for Christ's fake hath forgiven us Col. in. 12, 13.

Eightly, We should come from this ordinance longing for heaven. Every good Christian lives in the belief of the life everlasting, which God, that cannot lie, hath promised, looking for the blessed hope; and doubtless much of the power of godliness consists in the joyful expectation of the glory to be revealed. But though we should look upon ourselves as heathens if we did not believe it; and as desperate, if we had not some hopes of it: Yet we have all reason to lament it, as not only our inselicity, but our iniquity, that our desires towards it are so weak and seeble. We are too apt to take up our rest here, and wish we might live always on this earth; and we need something to make us hunger and thirst after that persect righteousness,

that crown of righteoufness, with which only we shall be filled: For this good end the Lord's Supper is very improveable, to hasten us towards the land of promise, and carry out our souls in earnest breathings

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(1.) The complaints we find cause to exhibit at this ordinance, should make us long for heaven; for whatever is defective and uneafy here, we shall be for ever freed from when we come to heaven. When here we fet ourselves to contemplate the beauty of God and the love of Christ, we find ourselves in a cloud, we fee but through a glass darkly; let us therefore long to be there where the veil shall be rent, the glaffes we now make use of laid afide and we shall, not only fee face to face but, which will yield us more fatisfaction, we shall see how we are seen, and know how we are known. When here we would foar upwards upon the wings of love, we find ourselves clogged and pinioned; this immortal fpirit is caged in a house of clay, and doth but flutter at the best: Let us therefore long to be there, where we shall be persectly delivered from all the incumberances of a body of flesh, and all the entanglements of a world of fense; and love in its highest elevations, and utmost enlargements, shall survive both faith and hope. When here we would fix for God, and join ourselves closely to him, we find ourselves apt to wander, apt to waver, and should therefore long to be there, where our love to God will be no longer love in motion, constant motion, as it is here, but love at rest, an everlasting rest. Here we complain, that, through the infirmity of the flesh, we are foon weary of well doing; and, if the spirit be willing, yet the flesh is weak, and cannot keep pace with it: But there we shall run and not be weary. we shall walk and not faint: and shall not rest, because we shall not need to rest day nor night from praising God. O when shall I come to that world where there

is neither fin, nor forrow, nor fnare; and to the fpirits of just men made persect there, who are as the

angels of God in heaven!

(2.) The comforts which through grace we experience in this ordinance, thould make us long for heaven. The fortaftes of those divine joys should whet our appetites after the full fruition of them. The bunch of grapes that meets us in this wilderness should make us long to be in Canaan, that land of overflowing plenty, where we shall wash our garments in this wine, and our clothes in the blood of the grape. Gen. xlix. 11. Rev. vii. 14. If communion with God. in grace here afford us fuch a fatisfaction as far furpasseth all the delights of the sons of men, what will the fulness of joy be in God's presence, and those pleafures for ever more? If the shadows of good things to come be to refreshing, what will the substance be, and the good things themselves? If God's tabernacles be fo amiable, what will his temple be? If a day at his courts, an hour at his table, be fo pleasant; what then will an eternity within the veil be? If I find myfelf fo enriched with the earnest of the purchased possesfion, what then will the possession itself be? If the joy of my Lord, as I am here capable of receiving it, and as it is mixed with fo much allay in this imperfect state, be so comfortable: what will it be when I shall enter into that joy, and bathe myself eternally in the fpring-head of these rivers of pleasure.

Pant then, my foul, pant after those fountains of living water, out of which all these sweet streams arise; that boundless bottomless ocean of delights, into which they all run. Rest not content with any of the contentments here below; no, not with those in holy ordinances (which are of all others the best we meet with in this wilderness) but long for the enjoyments above in the vision of God. It is good to be here, but it is better to be there; far better to depart, and

and to be with Christ. While thou art groaning under the burdens of this present state, groan after the glorious liberties of the children of God in the suture state. Thirst for God, for the living God: O when shall I come and appear before God! That the day may break, and the shadows slee away, "Make haste, "my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a "young hart upon the mountains of spices."

## G H A P. XIII.

An Exhortation to order the conversation aright after the Ordinance.

TE will now suppose the new moon to be gone, the Sabbath to be past, and the solemnites of the facrament day to be over: and is our work now done? No, now the most needful and difficult part of our work begins; which is, to maintain fuch a constant watch over ourselves, as that we may, in the whole course of our conversation, exemplify the bleffed fruits and effects of our communion with God in this ordinance. When we come down from this mount, we must, as Moses did bring the tables of the testimony with us in our hands, that we may in all things have respect to God's commandments, and frame our lives according to them. Then we truly get good by this ordinance, when we are made better by it, and use it daily as a bridle of restraint to keep us in from all manner of fin, and a four of constraint to put us on to all manner of duty.

I shall endeavour, 1st, To give some general rules for the right ordering of the conversation after we have been at the Lord's Supper; and then, 2dly, I shall instance, in some particulars, wherein we must study to conform ourselves to the intentions of that

ordinance, and abide under the influence of it.

For

For the first, The Lord's supper was instituted not only for the solemnizing of the memorial of Christ's death at certain times, but for the preserving of the remembrance of it in our minds at all times, as a powerful argument against every thing that is ill, and a prevailing inducement to every thing that is good, in this sense we must "bear about with us continually "the dying of the Lord Jesus, so as that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies," Cor. iv. 10. It was instituted not only for the sealing of the covenant, that it may be ratisfied, but for the imprinting of it upon our minds, that we may be ever mindful of the covenant, and live under the commanding power of it.

We must see to it that there be an agreement between our performances at the Lord's table, and at other times that we be uniform in our religion, and not guilty of a self-contradiction. What will it profit us, if we pull down with one hand what we build up with the other? and undo in our lives what we have done in our devotions? That we may not do so, let us be

ruled by these rules:

adorn the profession which in the Lord's Supper we have made. We have in that ordinance solemnly owned ourselves the disciples and sollowers of the Lord Jesus; we have done ourselves the honour to subscribe ourselves his humble servants, and he hath done us the honour to admit us into his samily: and now we are concerned to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called; that, our relation to Christ being so much an honour to us, we may never be a dishonour to it. We are said to be taken into covenant with God for this very end, that we may be unto him for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory," Jer. xiii. 11. that we may be witnesses for him, and for the honour of his name among men.

We must therefore be very cautious, that we never fay or do any thing to the reproach of the gospel and. Christ's holy religion, or which may give any occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. If those that profess to be devout towards God, be unjust and dishonest towards men, this casts reproach upon devotion. as if that would confift with, and countenance, immortality. If those who call themselves Christians walk as other Gentiles walk, and do Satan's drudgery in Christ's livery, Christianity suffers by it, and religion is wounded in the house of her friends: Injuries are done, which cannot be repaired; and those will have a great deal to answer for another day, for whose sakes the name of God and his doctrine are thus evil fooken of. By our coming to the Lord's Supper, we diffinguish ourselves from those whose profession of Christianity. by their being baptized in infancy, feems to be more their chance than their choice; and, by a voluntary act of our own, we firname ourselves by the name of Ifrael; now if, after we have thus diftinguished ourfelves, and fo raised the expectations of our neighbours from us, we do that which is unbecoming the character we bear, if we be vain and carnal, and intemperate. if we be false and unfair, cruel and unmerciful, What will the Egyptians fay? They will fay, Commend us to the children of this world, if these be the children of God; for what do they more than others? Men's prejudices against religion are hereby confirmed, advantage is given to Satan's devices, and the generation of the righteous is condemned for the fake of those who are spots in their feasts of charity. Let us therefore always be jealous for the reputation of our profession, and afraid of doing that which may in the least be a blemish to it: and the greater profession we make, the more tender let us be of it, because we have the more eyes upon us, that watch for our halting; when we do good, we must remember the apostle's caution, "Let "not your good be evil spoken of, Rom. xiv. 16.

We must also be very studious to do that which will redound to the credit of our profession. It is not enough that we be not a feandal to religion, but we must strive to be an ornament to it, by excelling in virtue, and being forward to every good work. Our light must shine as the face of Moses did, when he came down from the mount; that is, our good works must be such, as that they who fee them, may give religion their good word and thereby, " glorify our Father which is in "heaven," Matth. v. 16. "Our conversation must be " as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ," that they who will not be won by the word, may be won by it to fav. "We will go with you, for we have heard that God " is with you," " If there be any virtue, if there be any " praife, more amiable and lovely than another, let us "think on these things," Phil. iv. 3. Are we children? Let us walk as obedient children, well taught, and well managed. Are we foldiers? Let us approve-ourfelves good foldiers, well trained and well disciplined; fo shall we do honour to him that hath called us. If God's Israel carefully keep and do his statutes, it will be faid of them to their honour among the nations, "Surely they are a wife and understanding people." Deut. iv. 6. And this will redound to the honour of Christ; for thus wisdom is justified of her children.

fulfil the engagements which at the Lord's supper we have laid ourselves under. Having at God's altar sworn that we will keep his righteous judgments, we must conscientiously perform it in all the instances of a holy, righteous, and sober conversation. The vows we have made, express or implicit, must be carefully made good by a constant watchfulness against all sin, and a constant diligence in all duty; because, "better it is not to "vow, than to yow and not to pay," Eccl. v. 4, 5.

When we are at any time tempted to fin, or in danger of being furprifed into any ill thing, let this be our reply reply to the tempter, and with this let us quench his fiery darts, "Thy vows are upon me O God. Did I " not fay, I will take heed to my ways, that I fin not "with my tongue? I did fay fo, and therefore I will " keep my mouth as with a bridle," Pfal xxxix. 1. Did not I make a covenant with mine eyes? I did; that therefore shall be to me a covering of the eyes. that they may never be either the inlets or outless of fin. Did I not fay, "I will not transgres?" Jer. ii. 20. I did fay fo; and therefore, by the grace of God. I will "abstain from all appearance of evil, and have " no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."

An honest man is as good as his word.

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When we begin to grow flothful and careless in our duty backward to it, and flight in it, let this it r up the gift that is in us, and quicken us to every good word and work. "O my foul, thou hast faid unto the "Lord thou art my Lord;" thou hast said it with the blood of Christ in thy hand: " He is thy Lord then, " and worthip thou, him," Pfal. xvi. 2 .- xlv. 11. "When a lion in the way, a lion in the streets," deters us from any duty, and we cannot, "plow by rea-" fon of cold, nor fow or reap for fear of winds and "clouds," let this help us over the difficulty with a fleady resolution; it is what I have promised, and I must perform it: I will not I dare not be false to my God and my covenant with him; "Thave opened my " mouth unto the Lord, and without incurring the " guilt of perjury, I cannot go back."

adly, Our conversation must be such, as that we may make fome grateful returns for the favours which we have here received. The law of gratitude is one of the laws of nature; for the ox knows his owner, and the afs his mafter's crib; and fome have thought that all our gospel-duty may very fitly be comprized in that of gratitude to our Redeemer. In the Lord's Supper we see what Christ hath done for us, and we receive what he bestows on us; and, in consideration of both,

we must set ourselves, not only to love and praise him, but to walk before him in the land of the living; that though we cannot return him any equivalent for his kindness, yet, by complying with his will, and consulting his honour, we may shew that we bear a grateful mind and would render ain according to the benefit done unto us.

By wilful fin after a facrament, we load ourselves with the guilt, not only of treachery, but of base in. gratitude. It was a great aggravation of Solomon's apostacy, that, " he furned from the Lord God of Ifrae!, which had appeared unto him twice," I Kings xi. o. More than twice, yea, many a time hath God appeared, not only for us in his providences, but to us in his ordinances, manifelling himfelf in a diflinguishing way to us, and not unto the world: now, if we carry ourselves strangely to him who hath been such a friend to us, if we affront him who hath fo favoured us, and rebel against him who hath not only spared but ransomed us, we deserve to be stigmatized with a mark of everlafting infamy, as the most ungrateful wretches that ever God's earth bore, or his fun shone upon. Foolish people and unwife are we, thus to requite the Lord. Let us therefore reason thus with ourselves, when at any time we are tempted to fin. After he hath given us fuch a deliverance as this, thall we again break his commandments? Shall we fpit in the face, and spurn at the bowels of such loving kindness? After we have eaten bread with Christ, shall we go and lift up the heel against him? No, God forbid; we will not continue in fin after grace has thus abounded, Rom. vi. 1, 2.

By an exact and exemplary conversation we shew ourselves sensible of the mighty obligations we lie under to love him, and live to him, who loved us, and died for us: we should therefore from a principle of gratitude, always abound in the work of the Lord, and lay out ourselves with zeal and chearfulness in his ser-

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vice; thinking nothing too much to do, too hard to fuffer; or too dear to part with, for him that hath done and fuffered, and parted with fo much for us.

Let the love of Christ constrain us.

4thly Our conversation must be such as that we may preserve the comforts which in the Lord's Supper we have tasted. Have we been latisfied with the goodness of God's house? Let us not receive the grace of God therein in vain, by the forseiture or neglect of those fatisfactions. Fear the Lord and his goodness, Hof. iii. 5. that is, Fear lest you fin against that goodness. and fo fin it away. Have we received Christ lesus the Lord? Let us hold fast what we have received, that no man take our crown, and the comfort of it. Hath God here spoken peace to us? Let us then never return to folly, left we break in upon that peace that God hath fpoken: it is a jewel too precious to be pawned, as it is by the covetous for the wealth of this world. and by the voluptuous for the pleasures of the fieth? Have we tasted that the Lord is gracious? Let not us put our mouths out of tafte to those spiritual and divine pleasures by any carnal delights or gratifications. Hath God made us to hear joy and gladness? Let us not fet ourfelves out of the hearing of that joyful found, by liftening to the voice of Satan's charms, charm he never fo wifely.

If we walk loofely and carelefsly after a facrament, we provoke God to hide his face from us, to take from us the cup of confolation, and to put in our hands inflead of it the cup of trembling we cloud our evidences, flake our hopes, and wither our comfort, and undo what we have been doing at this ordinance. That caution therefore which the apostle gives to the elect lady and her children, should be ever sounding in our ears, 2 John, ver. 8. "Look to ourselves, that we lose "not the things which we have wrought:" or, as the margin reads it, "the things that we have gained."

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Let us not by our own folly and neglect, let slip the benefit of what we have done, and what we have got

at the table of the Lord.

Especially, we should take heed lest Satan get an advantage against us, and improve that to our prejudice. which we do not take due care to improve as we ought to our benefit. After the fop, Satan entered into Judas, John xiii. 27. If the comforts which we think we have received in this ordinance do not make us more watchful, it is well if they do not make us more fecure. If they be not a favour of life unto life, by deterring us from fin, there is danger left they prove a favour of death unto death, by hardening us in fin. It was one of the most impudent words which that adulterous woman fpoke, and she spoke a great many, when she allured the young man into her fnares, Prov. vii. 15. "I have peace offerings with me this day I have paid " my vows ; therefore came I forth to meet thee." I have confessed, and been absolved, and therefore can the better afford to begin upon a new score; I know the worst of it, it is but being confessed and absolved again: but shall we continue in fin, because grace bath abounded, and that grace may abound? God forbid: far be it, far be it from us ever to entertain fuch a thought. Shall we fuck poison out of the balm of Gilead? and split our souls upon the rock of salvation? "Is Christ the minister of sin? Shall the artifices of our spiritual enemies turn this table into a snare, and that on it, which should be for our welfare into a trap? Those are but pretended comforts in Christ, that are thus made real supports in fin: "Be not deceived, Ged " is not mocked." Hell will be hell indeed to those who thus "trample under foot the blood of the cove-" nant as an unholy thing, and do despite to the spi-" rit of grace." Their case is desperate indeed, that are emboldened in fin by their approaches to God. 5thly, Our

nels ;

sthly, Our conversation must be such as that we may evidence the communion we have had with God in Christ at the Lord's table. It is not enough to fay that we have fellowship with him; the vilest hypocrites pretend to that honour, but, by walking in darknefs. they disprove their pretensions, and give themselves the lie, 1 John i. 6. We must therefore shew that we have fellowship with him, by walking in the light, ver. 7. and as he also walked, I John ii. 6. By keeping up communion with God in providences, having our eyes ever towards him, and acknowledging him in all our ways; receiving all our comforts as the gifts of his bounty, and bearing our afflictions as his fatherly chastilements we evidence that we have had communion with him in ordinances. They that converse much with scholars, evidence it by the tongue of the learned; as one may likewife discover by the politeness and refinedness of a man's air and mien, that his conversation hath been much with persons of quality: thus they that have communion with the holy God, should make it appear in all holy conversation; not fuffering any corrupt communication to proceed out of their mouth, but abounding in that which is good, and to the use of edifying, that by our fpeech and behaviour it may appear what country we belong to.

When Peter and John quitted themselves before the council with such a degree of conduct and assurance, as one could not have expected from unlearned and ignorant men, not acquainted with courts, or camps, or academies; it is said, that they who marvelled, at it, "took knowledge of them that they had been with "Jesus," Acts iv. 3. And from those who had been with Jesus, who had sollowed him, sat at his seet, and eaten bread with him, very great things might be expected. In this ordinance we have been with Jesus, we have been seeing his beauty, and tasting his sweet-

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ness; and now we should live so, as that all who converse with us may discern it, and by our holy heavenly converse may take knowledge of us, that we

have been with Jesus,

For the second thing proposed, Let us instance in some particulars wherein we ought in a special manner to approve ourselves well after this solemnity, that "as we have received Jesus Christ the Lord, we may "so walk in him," Col. ii. 6.

After we have been admitted into communion with God, and have renewed our covenants with him at his table, it behaves us to be careful in these fix things.

(1.) We must see to it, that we be fincerely devout and pious. It is not enough that we live foberly and righteously, but we must live godly in this present world, and our facramental engagements fhould fiir us up to abound therein more and more. After an interview with our friends, by which mutual acquaintance is improved, and mutual affections confirmed, we are more conflant and endearing in our correspondence with each other: fo we should be with God after this ordinance, more frequent in holy ejaculations, and breathings of foul towards God, intermixed even with common business and conversation; more abundant in reading, meditation, and folemn prayer; more diligent in our attendance on public ordinances, more fixed and enlarged in closet devotions, and more lively and affectionate in our family worthip. Those religious exercifes wherein we have formerly been remis and careless, casily perfuaded to put them by, or put them off, we fhould now be more constant to, and more careful in, more close in our application to them, and more ferious in our performance of them.

If we have indeed found, that it is good for us to draw near to God, we will endeavour to keep near him, so near him, as upon every occasion to speak to him, and to hear from him. If this sacrament has

been

been our delight, the word will be our delight, and we will delay converse with it: prayer will be our delight, and we will give ourselves to it, and continue instant in it. They that have been scassed upon the sacrifice of atonement, ought to abound in sacrifices of acknowledgement, the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, and a broken heart which are acceptable to God through Christ Jesus: and, having in our slock a male, we must offer that, and not a corrupt thing.

It is the fliame of many who are called Christians, and have a name and a place in God's family, that they are as backward and indifferent in holy duties, as if they were afraid of doing too much for God and their own fouls, and as if their chief care were to know just how much will ferve to bring them to heaven, that they may do no more. They can be content to go a mile, but they are not willing to go twain. And doth it become those, on whom God hath fown fo plentifully, to make their returns fo sparingly? Ought we not rather to inquire what free-will offerings we may bring to God's altar? and how we may do more in religion than we have used to do? They that have found what a good table God keeps, and how welcome they have been to it, should defire to dwell in his house all the days of their life; and blesfed are they that do fo, "they will be flill praising "him," Pfat. xxvii. 4 .- lxxxiv. 4.

(2.) We must see to it that we be conscientiously just and honest. We not only contradict our profession, and give ourselves the lie, but we reproach the religion we profess and give it the lie, is after we have been at this sacrament, we deceive or defraud our brethren in any matter; for this is that which the Lord our God requires of us, that we do justly, i. e. that we never do wrong to any, in their body goods, or good name; and that we ever study to render to all their due, according to the relation we stand in,

and the obligation we lie under to them. That therefore which is altogether just ("justice, justice," as the word is,) "thou thalt follow," Duet. xvi. 20. There are many who make no great pretentions to religion. and yet natural conscience, sense of honour, and a regard to the common good, keep them firictly just in all their dealings, and they would fcorn to do a base and dishonest thing: and shall not the bonds of this ordinance, added to those inducements, restrain us from every thing that hath but the appearance of fraud and injustice? A Christian, a communicant, and yet a cheat! Yet a man not to be trusted, not to be dealt with, but standing on one's guard; how can these be reconciled? Will that man be true to his God whom he hath not feen, that is false to his brother whom he hath feen? Shall he be entrusted with the true riches, that is " not " faithful in the unrighteous mammon?" Luke xvi. 11.

Let the remembrance of our facramental vows be always fresh in our minds, to give check to those secret covetings, which are the fprings of all fradulent practices. I have disclaimed the world for a portion. shall I then for the compassing of a little of its forbidden gain, wrong my brother whom I ought to do good to, wrong my profession which I ought to adorn, and wrong my own conscience which I ought to keep void of offence? God forbid. I have likewife renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and promised not to walk in craftiness: " By the grace of God I will therefore " ever have my conversation in the world, in simpli-" city and godly fincerity, not with fleshly wisdom," 2 Cor. i. 12 .- iv. 2. They that are fo well skilled in the arts of deceit, as to fave themselves from the scandal of it, and to be able to fay with Ephraim, though he had the balances of deceit in his hand, "In all my " labours they shall find no iniquity in me, that were " fin." Hof. xii. 7, 8. yet cannot thereby fave themfelves from the guilt of it, and the ruin that attendit;

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it: for doubtless, "the Lord is the avenger of all "fuch," I Thess iv. 6. Those that cheat their neighbours cannot cheat their God, but will prove in the end to have cheated themselves into everlasting mifery: "And what is man profited, if he gain the whole

" world, and lofe his own foul?"

(3.) We must see to it, that we be religiously meek and peaceable. We must not only come from this ordinance in a calm and quiet frame, but we must always keep ourselves in such a frame. By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, (which the Apostle mentions as a most powerful charm, 2 Cor. x. 1.) let us be wrought upon to be always meek and gentle, as those that have learned of him. The storms of passion, that are here laid, must never be suffered to make head again; nor must the enmities that are here slain, ever be revived. Having eaten of this gospel passover, we must all our life long keep the feast without the "leaven of malice " and wickedness," I Cor. v. 8. Having been feasted at wisdom's table, we must always abide under the conduct and influence of that wisdom, which is first pure, and then "peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, James iii. 17. God was greatly despleased with those that, after they released their bond servants, according to the law, recalled their releafes, and brought them into fubjection again, Jer. xxxiv. 11. 17. And fo will he be with those who seem to set aside their quarrels when they come to the facrament, but, as foon as the pang of their devotion is over, the heat of their passion returns, and they refume their quarrels, and revive all their angry refentments; thereby making it to appear, that they did never truly forgive, and therefore were never forgiven of God. Factum non diciter quod non perseverat.

Let those that have had communion with God in this ordinance, be able to appeal to their relations and domestics, and all they converse with concerning this;

and to vouch them for witnesses, that they have mastered their passions, and are grown more mild and quiet in their families than fometimes the have been, and that even when they are most provoked, they know both how to hear reason, and how to speak it. Whatever others do, let us never give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to fay, that the feriousness of religion makes men four and morose, and that zeal in devotion disposeth the mind to previshness and passion; but, let us evidence the contrary, that the grace of God doth indeed make men good natured, and that the pleafures of ferious godliness make men truly chearful and easy to all about them. Having been here sealed "to " the day of redemption, let us not grieve the holy "Spirit of God," that bleffed dove; and that we may now, "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and " clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from us, with " all malice," as it follows there, Eph. iv. 30, 31.

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(4.) We must see to it, that we be strictly sober and chaste. Gluttony, and drunkenness, and fleshly lusts, are as great a reproach as can be to those that profels relation to Christ, and the expediation of eternal life. It becomes those that have been seasted at the table of the Lord, and have there tafted the pleasures of the spiritual and divine life," to be dead to all the delights of fenfe, and to make it appear that they are fo, by a holy indifferency to them. Let not the fleih be indulged to the prejudice of the spirit, nor provifion made for the fulfilling of the lufts thereof. Have we been entercained with the dainties of heaven? Let us not be defirous of the dainties of fense, nor folicitous to have the appetite gratified, and all our enjoyments to the highest degree pleasing. When our Lord had inflituted his supper, and gave this cup of blefling to his disciples, he added, Matth. xxvi. 29. " I will "not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine:" Now welcome the bitter cup, the yinegar, and the gall: teaching

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teaching us after a facrament to fit more loofe than before to bodily delights, and to be better reconciled to hardships and disappointments in them. It was the fin and shame of the ifractites in the wilderness, that while they were fed with manna, angels food, they lusted, saying, "Who will give us sless to eat?" And they sin after the similitude of that transgression, who, when they had eaten of the bread of life, and drunk of the water of life, yet continue to be as curious and careful about their meat and drink, as if they knew no better things, and had their happiness bound up in them; as if the kingdom of God were in this sense meat and drink, and a Turkish paradise were their heaven. Surely they that are of this spirit serve not our Lord Christ, but their own bellies.

But if they thus shame themselves who indulge the flesh, though their reason remaineth with them; what shall we think of those who by their intemperance put themselves quite out of possession of their own souls, disfit themselves for the service of God, and level themfelves with the beafts? A Christian, a communicant? and yet a tipler, a drunkard, and a companion with those that run to this excess of roit. This, this is the fin that bath been the feandal and ruin of many who, having begun in the spirit, have thus ended in the flesh: this is that which hath quenched the spirit, hardened the heart, befotted the head, debauched the conscience, withered the profession, and so hath sain its thousands, and its ten thousands. Against this sin therefore the Lord's prophet must cry aloud, and not fpare: of the danger of this, the watchmen are concerned to give warning; and dare those who partake " of the "cup of the Lord, drink of the cup of devils? I Cor. x. 21. Can there be so much concord between light and darkefs, between Christ and Belial; No, there cannot, these are contrary the one to the other. If mens communicating will not break them off from their drunkenness, their drunkenness must break them of from com-

municating; for these are spots in our feasts of charity; and, if God be true, "drunkards shall not inherit the " kingdom of God." Let me therefore with all earnest. ness, as one that desires to obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful, warn all that profess religion and relation to Christ, to stand upon their gaurd against this snare, which hath been fatal to multitudes. As you tender the favour of God, the comforts of the Spirit, the credit of your profession, and the welfare of your own fouls here and hereafter, take heed of been entangled in any temptations to fin; shun the fociety of these evil doers, abstain from all the appearances of this fin: watch and be fober: he "that loved us and washed us "from our fins in his own blood, hath made us unto our "God kings and priefts," Rev. i. 5, 6. Are we priefts? This was the law of the priesthood, and it was a law made upon occasion of the death of Nadab and Abihu, who probably had "erred through wine," Lev. x. g. "Do not drink wine or firong drink, when ye go into "the tabernacle of the congregation." Are we kings? "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to " drink wine; -left they drink and forget the law," Prov. xxxi. 4, 5. It is not for Christians to drink to excefs, and to allow themselves in those riotings and revellings, which even the fober Heathen condemned and abhorred.

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Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness, are likewise lusts of the stell, and defiling to the
soul which therefore all those must carefully avoid
that profess to be led by the Spirit: they are abominable things which the Lord hates, and which we also
must hate. Are not our bodies temples of the Holy
Ghost! Dare we then defile them? Are they not members of Christ? And shall we make them the members
of an harlot: Let those that eat of the holy things, be
holy both in body and spirit, and "possess their ves"fels in sanctification and honour, and not in the lusts
"of uncleanness. Let those eyes never be guilty of a
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wanton look, that have here seen Christ evidently set forth crucified among us; let not lewd, corrupt communication proceed out of that mouth into which God's covenant hath been taken; let not unclean lascivious thoughts be ever harboured in that heart which the holy Jesus vouchsafes to dwell in. Let those that have eaten of wisdom's bread, and drunk of the wine that she hath mingled, never hearken to the invitations of the soolish woman, who courts the unwary to stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret, under pretence that they are sweet and pleasant; "for the "dead are there, and her guests are in the depths of

" hell," Prov. ix. 17, 18.

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(5.) We must see to it that we be abundantly charitable and beneficent. It is not enough that we do no hurt, but if we would order our conversation aright. we must, as we have opportunity, do good to all men, as becomes those to whom God in Christ is good, and doth good, and who profess themselves the disciples and followers of him who went about doing good. Shall we be felfish and feek our own things only who have here feen how Christ humbled and emptied himself for us? Shall we be sparing of our pains for our brethrens good, who have here feen Christ among us, as one that ferveth, as one that fuffereth, and as one who came not to be ministred unto, "but to minister, and to give "his life a ranfom for many?" Shall we be shy of speaking to, or speaking for our poor brethren, who have here feen our Lord Jesus not ashamed to own us. and interceed for us, notwithstanding our poverty and meanness? Shall we be strait handed in distributing to the necessities of the saints, who have here found Chirst fo liberal and open-handed in imparting to us, not only the gospel of God, but even his own foul. After we have been at this ordinance, we should shew how much we are affected with our receiving there, by being ready and forward "to every good work; because our "goodness extendeth not to God, it ought to extend " to

to the failts that are in the earth," Pfal. zvi. 2, 3. Thus we must be " followers of God as dear children; " we must walk in love, as here we see Christ hath " loved us, and given himfelf for us," tph. v. 1, 2.

(6.) We must see to it, that we be more taken off from this world, and more taken up with another world. A Christian then lives like himself, when he lives above the things that are feen, which are temporal, and looks upon them with a holy contempt, and keeps his eye fixed upon the things that are not feen, which are eternal, looking upon them with a holy concern. We are not of this world, but we are called out of it; we belong to another world, and are defigned for it; we must therefore "leek the things that are above, " and not fet our affections on things beneath."

The thoughts of Christ crucified should wean us from this world, and make us out of love with it: The world knew him not, but hated him; the princes of this world crucified him: but he overcome the world, and we also by faith in him may obtain a victory over it; fuch a victory over it, as that we may not be entangled with its fnares, encumbered with its cares, or difquieted by its forrows. By frequent meditation on the cross of Christ, " the world will be crucified to us, "and we to the world," Gal. vi. 14. that is, the world and we shall grow very indifferent one to ano-

ther, and no love shall be lost between us.

The thoughts of Christ glorified should raise our hearts to that bleffed place where Christ "fitteth on " the right hand of God, Col. iii. 1. and from whence "we look for the Saviour," Phil. iii. 20. When we commemorate Christ's entrance within the vail as our fore-runner, and have good hopes of following him shortly; when we think of his being in paradife, and of our being with him; how frould our affections be carried out towards that joy of our Lord? How studious should we be to do the work of heaven, conform to the laws of heaven, and converse as much as may be with the

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tion of four, we should improve our acquaintance with, and raise our expections of the inheritance of fons.

## C H A P. XIV.

Some Words of Comfort which this Ordinance speaks to Serious Christians.

THE Lord's Supper was intended for the comfort of good people, not only while they are actually attending on God in it, but ever after; not only that their joy may be full, but that this joy may remain in them, John xv. II. It is a feaft which was made for laughter: not that of the fool, which determines in a figh, and the end of it is heaviness, but that of the truly wife man, who hath learned to rejoice evermore, yea to rejoice in the Lord always; not that of the hypocrite whose triumphing is short, and his joys but " for a moment," Job xx. 5. but that of the fincere Christian, whom God caufeth always " to tri-"umph in Chrift," 2 Cor iil. 14. The water that Christ here gives, is defigned to be a well of water, living water, fending forth " fireams that make glad the "city of our God," This feaft, if it be not our own fault. will be to us a continual feast, and a breast of confolation, from which we may daily fuck and be fatisfied.

(1) It is the will of God that his people should be a comforted people. The most evangelical part of the prophecy of Isaiah begins with this, Chap. 11. 1 "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith our God." He takes pleasure in their prosperity, he delights to fee them cheerful, and to hear them sing at their work, and sing in his ways. Religion was never intended to make people melancholy; wisdom's adversaries do her wrong if they paint her in mourning, and wisdom's children do not do her right, if they give them occa-

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from to do fo; for though they are, like St Paul, as forrowful, yet they should be like him, always rejoicing; because, though they seem perhaps to have nothing, yet really they posses all things, 2 Cor iv. 10. So good a master do we serve, that he hath been pleased to twist interests with us, and so compound his glory and our comfort, that, in seeking the one, we seek the other also. He hath made that to be our duty, which is indeed our greatest privilege, and that is, to delight ourselves always in the Lord, and to live a life of complacency in him. And it is the New Testament character of a Christian indeed, that he

rejoiceth in Christ Jesus, Phil. iii. 3.

(2.) Good Christians have of all people most reason to rejoice and be comforted. As for those that are at a distance from God, and out of covenant with him. they have reason to be afflicted, and mourn and weep. "Rejoice not, O Ifreal, for joy as other people, for "thou hast gone a whoring from thy God," Hos. ix. 1. To them that eat of the forbidden tree of knowledge, this tree of life also is forbidden: but those that devote themselves to God, have all the reason in the world to delight themselves in God. They that "ask " the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, though "they go weeping to feek the Lord their God," Jer. 1. 4, 5. yet they shall go on rejoicing, when they have found him; for they cannot but find the way pleafantness, and the paths of it peace. Have not they reason to smile, on whom God smiles? If God hath put grace into the heart, hath he not put gladness there, and a new long into the mouth? Is Christ proclaimed king in the foul? And ought it not to be done with acclamations of joy? Is the atonement received, and the true treasure found? And shall we not rejoice with joy unspeakable? Have we good hope through grace of entering shortly into the joy of our Lord, and have we not cause now to rejoice in the hope of it. -1000 mada 2710 vat an ing isit ab ron ba (3) Yet

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(3.) Yet those who have so much reason to rejoice are often cast down and in forrow, and not altogether without cause. This state of probation and preparation is a mixed flate, and it is proper enough it should be fo for the trial and exercise of various graces, and that God's power may have the praise of keeping the balance even. In those whose hearts are visited by the day-fpring from on high, the light is neither clear nor dark, it is "neither day nor night," Zech. xiv. 6, 7. They have their comforts, which they would not exchange for the peculiar treasure of kings and provinces: but withal they have their croffes under which they groan, being burdened. They have their hopes, which are an anchor to the foul, both fure and stedfast, entering into that within the vail; but withat they have their fears, for their warfare is not yet accomplified; they have not yet attained, neither are already perfect. They have their joys, fuch as the world can neither give nor take away, joys that a Aranger doth not intermiddle with; but withal they have their griefs, their way to Canaan lies through a wilderness, and their way to Jerusalem through the valley of Baca. Their master was himself a man of forrows, and acquainted with griefs, and they are to be his followers. While we are here, we must not think it frange, if, for a feafon, when need is, we are in heaviness; we cannot expect to reap in joy hereafter, unless we now fow in tears. We must not therefore think that either the present happiness of the faints, which in this world they are to expect, or their present holiness, which in this world they are to endeavour, confifts in fuch delights and joys, as to leave no room for any mourning, and fense of trouble; no. there is a forrow, that is a godly forrow, a jealoufy of ourselves, that is a godly jealousy: It is only a perfect love that casts out all fear, and all grief, which we are not to expect in this imperfect flate. All tears hall not be wiped away from your eyes, nor hall forrow and fighing quite flee away, till we come to heaven; while we are here, we are in a valley of tears, and must conform to the temper of the climate; we are at ice, and must expect to be tossed with tempests; we are in the camp, and must expect to be alarmed; while without are fighting, no wonder that within are fears.

(4.) Our Lord Jefus hath therefore provided fuch comforts for the relief of his people, in their prefent forfowful flate, as may ferve to balance their griefs, and keep them from being pressed above measure; and he hath inflituted holy ordinances, and especially this of the Lord's Supper, for the application of those comforts to them, that they may never fear, may never forrow as those that have no hope or no joy. The covenant of grace as it is ministred in the everlasting gospel, hath in it a falve for every fore, a redemy for every malady, fo that they who have an interest in that covenant, and know it, may triumph with bleffed Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. "Though we are troubled on "every fide, yet we are not distressed; perplexed " fometimes, but, thanks be to God not in despair; of perfecuted by men, but not forfaken of God; cast "down, and drooping, but not destroyed and lost." This is that which bears them up under all their burdens, comforteth them in all their griefs, and enabled them to rejoice in tribulation; God is theirs, and they are his, and he hath " made with them an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and fure, and "this is all their falvation, and all their defire, how-"ever it be," 2 Sam. xxin. 5. W. and m. Salv and

The word of God is written to them for this end, that their joy may be full," I John i. 3. "and that through patience and comfort of the scriptures, they may have hope," Rom. xv. 4. Precious promifes are there treasured up, to be the foundations of their taith and hope, and consequently the soundaries of their joy. Songs of thanksgiving are there drawn up for them to resresh themselves with in their weary pilgrimage

pilgrimage, and to have recourse to for the filencing of their complaints. Ministers are appointed to be the helpers of their joy, Cor. i. 24. and to speak comfort to fuch as mourn in Zion. The Sabbath is the day which the Lord hath made for this very end, that they may rejoice and be glad in it. Prayer is appointed for the ease of troubled spirits, that in it they may pour out their complaints before God, and fetch in comfort from him: " Ask and ye shall receive, that "your joy may be full." This facrament was ordained for the comfort of good Christains, for the confirmation of their faith, in order to the preservation and increase of their joy; and they ought to improve it both for the strengthening of the habit of holy chearfulness, and their actual encouragement against the several particular grievances of this present time. And there is no complaint, which a good Christian hath cause to make at any time, which he may not qualify, and keep from growing clamorous by comforts drawn from what he hath feen and tafted, what he hath done and received at the Lord's table. Let us therefore be daily drawing water out of these wells of falvation; and when our fouls are cast down and dispuieted within us let us fetch arguments from our communion with God in this ordinance, both in chiding them from their defpondency, and encouraging them to hope and rejoice in God. What is it that grieves and oppresses us? why is our countenance fad, and why go we mourning all the day long? Whatever the occasion of the heaviness is, let it be weighed in the balance of the fanduary, and I dare fay, their is that comfort to be fetched from this ordinance, which is sufficient to be set in the scale against it, and outweigh it. Let us instance in some of the common causes of our trouble, and try what relief we may from hence be turnished with.

First, Are we disquieted and discouraged by the remembrance of our former sins and provocations?

There is that here which will help to quiet and encourage

courage us in reference to this. Conscience sometimes calls to mind the fins of the unconverted state, and charges them home upon the foul, especially if they were heinous and scandalous; it repeats the reproach of the youth: rips up the old quarrels, and aggravates them; rakes in the old wounds, and makes them bleed afresh: and from hence the disconsolate soul is ready to draw fuch hard conclusions as those: Surely it is impossible that so great a finner as I have been, should be pardoned and accepted: that flich a prodigal should be welcomed home, and fuch a publican ever find mercy! Can I expect to fhare in that grace which I fo long flighted and finned against? Or to be taken into that covenant which I have fo often cast away the cords of? Will the holy God take one into the embraces of his love that hath been fo vile and finful, and Strer to be made a motiument of his wrath: Can there be any hopes for me? on, if there be some hope vete can there be any joy? If I may, through a miracle of mercy, cleape hell at last, which I have deserved a thousand times, yet ought I not to weep mine eyes out. and to "go foftly all my years in the bitternels of my " fout," Ifa, xxxviii. 15. Ought not I to go down to the grave mourning? Gen xxxvii. 25. Should not my foul now refuse to be comforted, which so long refused. to be fo convinced.

These are black and sad thoughts, and enough to sink the spirit, if we had not met with that at the Lords table, which gives a sufficient answer to all these diallenges. We have been great sinners, but there we have seen the great Redeemen, able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him; and have there called him by that name of his, which is as ointment poured forth, "The Lord our rightcousness." Our sins have reached to the heavens, but there we have seen God's mercy in Christ reaching beyond the heavens. We have been wretchedly desiled in our own ways, but there we have seen and only a lever, but

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but a fountain opened for the house of David to wash in, and have been assured that the blood of Christ eleanseth from all sin, even that which for the heinousness of its nature, and the multitude of its aggravations hath been as scarlot and crimson, Isa. i. 18. That article of the covenant, which is so expressive of a general pardon, hath been sealed to me upon gospel terms, Heb. viii. 12. "For I will be merciful to their un"righteousness and their sins, and their iniquities I will remember no more;" and this I rely upon. Great sinners have obtained mercy, and why may not I?

And though a humble remembrance of fin will be of use to us all our days, yet such a disquieting remembrance of it as hinders our faith in Christ, and our joy in God, is by no means good; even forrow for fin may exceed due bonds, and penitents may be fwallowed up with over much forrow, 2 Cor. ii. 7. The covenant of grace speaks not only pardon, but peace to all believers; and not only fets the broken bones, but makes them to rejoice, Pfal. li. 8. When it faith, "Thy fins be forgiven thee, it faith alfo, Son, Daugh-"ter be of good cheer," Mat. ix. 2. It is the duty of those that have received the atonement, to take the comfort of it, and to joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 11. Acts of felf-denial, and mortification are means and evidences of our fanctification, and fuch as we ought to abound in; but they are not the grounds of our justification; it is Christ's blood that makes the fanctification, not our tears. Therefore we must not so remember former fins, as to put away present comforts: a life of repentance will very well confift with a life of holy chearfulness.

Secondly, Are we disquieted and discouraged by the sense of our sins of daily insirmity? There is that here which will be a relief against this grievance also: I have not only former guilt to reslect upon, contracted in the days of my ignorance and unbelief, but, alas! I am still sinning, sinning daily. God knows, and my

own heart knows, that in many things I do offend. I come fort of the rule, and thart of the glory of God every day. Vain thoughts lodge within me, idle words proceed from me. If I would count either the one or the other, they are more in number than the fend. When I think of the firidness and extent of the divine law, and compare my own heart and life with it. I find that innumerable evils compais me about. Neglects of duty are many, and negligence in duty are more. Who can tell how oft he offends? If the righteous God should enter into judgement with me. and be extreme to mark what I do amifs, I were not able to answer him for one of a thousand. It might have been expected, that when the God of mercy had. upon my repentance, forgiven the rebellions of my finful flate, taken me into his family, and made me as ose of his hired fervants, nay, as one of his adopted children, that I should have been a dutiful child, and a diligent fervant : But, alas! I have been flothful and trifling, and in many inflances undutiful: I am very defective in my duty, both to my master, and to my fellow fervants, and in many things transgress daily. For thefe things I weep, mine eye, mine eyes runs down with tears.

But there is that in this ordinance which may keep us from finking under this burden, though we have cause enough to complain of it: It is true, I am singularly, and it is my forrow and shame that I am so; but the memorial of that great sacrifice which Jesus Christ offered once for all upon the cross, is therefore continually to be celebrated on earth, because the merit of it is continually pleaded in heaven, where Christ ever lives to make intercession in the virtue of his satisfaction: Having therefore celebrated the memorial of it at the table of the Lord, here, in the outer court I ought to take the comfort of the continual efficacy of it within the vail, and its prevalency for the benefit of all believers. The water out

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out of the rock, the rock smitten, sollows God's Israel through this wilderness, in the precious streams of which they that are walled are welcome to wash their feet from the pollutions they contract in their daily walk through this defiling world; and the best have need of this washing, John xiii. 10. That needful word of caution, that we fin not, is immediately sollowed with this word of comfort, but "if any man sin, "we have an Advocate with the Father;" one to speak for us, and to plead our cause; and he hath a good plea to put in on our behalf: for "he is the propitia-

tion for our fine," I John ii. 1, 2.

Add to this, That the covenant of grace, which is feated to us in this ordinance, is so well ordered in all things, and fo lure, that every transgression in the covenant doth not prefently throw us out of covenant. We do not fland upon the fame terms that Adam in innocency did, to whom the least failure was fatal: No, to us God hath "proclaimed his name gracious " and merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and-"fin." If we mourn for our fins of daily infirmity, are ashamed of them, and humble ourselves for them: if we strive and watch, and pray against them, we may be fure they shall not be laid unto our charge, but in Christ Jesus they shall be forgiven to us, for we are under grace, and not under the law. The God we are in covenant with is a God of pardon, Neh. ix. 17. "With him there is forgivenness," Pfal. cxxx. 4. We are instructed to pray for daily pardon as duly as we pray for daily bread, and are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace for mercy: fo that, though there be a remembrance made of fin every day, yet thanks be to God, there may be a remembrance made of the facrifice for fin; by which an everlafting righteoufness was brought in.

Thirdly, Are we disquieted and discouraged by the fad remainders of indwelling corruption? we may from thence derive support under this burden. All that

that are enlightened from on high; lament the original fin that dwelleth in them, as much as the actual transgrafions that are committed by them; not only that they are defective in doing their duty, but that they labour under a natural weakness and inability for it; not only that they are often overtaken in a fault, but that they have a natural proneness and inclination to that which is evil. It was the bitter complaint of bleffed Paul himself, "O wretched man that "I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this "death;" Rom. vii. 24. and it is the complaint of all that are spiritually alive, while they are here in this impersect state.

The most intelligent find themselves in the dark, and apt to mistake: the most contemplative find themselves unfixed, and apt to wander; the most active for God find themselves dull and apt to tire: when the spirit through grace is willing, yet the slesh is weak; and when we would do good, evil is present with us. Corrupt appetites and passions often get head, and betray us into many indecencies. This makes the heart sad, and the hands seeble; and, by reason of these remaining corruptions, many a good Christian loseth the comfort of his graces. Those Canaanites in the land are as thorns in the eyes, and gades in

the fides of many an Ifraelite.

But be not cast down my soul; the covenant which was sealed to thee at the table of the Lord, was a covenant of grace, which accept, sincerity as gospel persection, not a covenant of innocency, which accepts of nothing less than a sinless spotless purity. Were not these complaints poured out before the Lord, and did he not say, "My grace is sufficient for "thee?" And what canst thou desire more? 2 Corxii. 9. Was not orders given at the banquet of wine, for the crucifying of the adversary and enemy, this wicked Haman, so that, though it he not yet dead, it is a body of death, and ere long it shall be put off for

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ever. Was it not there faid to thee, was it not fealed, That fin shall not have dominion over thee; but, the "God of peace shall bruife Satan under thy feet short-" ly;" fo that, though he may for a while diffurb thy peace, and his troops may foil thee, yet like Gad in Jacob's bleffing, thou shalt "overcome at the last !" Gen. xlix. 18. "The bruifed reed thall not be bro-"ken, nor the smoaking flax quenched, but judgement " shall in due time be brought forth into victory." Grace shall get the upper hand of corruption, and be a conqueror, yea, " more that a conqueror, through " him that loved us. Come then, come let thy feet "upon the necks of these kings," and rejoice in the hope of a compleat victory at last. These lusts which war against thee, make war with the Lamb too, and oppose his interests; but, for certain, "The Lamb "Thallovercome them; for he is the Lord of lords, "and King of kings, and they that are with him, are " called and cholen, and faithful," Rev. xvii. 14. Thou hast seen on how firm a rock the kingdom of God within thee is built, and mayeff be fure that "the "gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christ hath given thee a banner to be displayed because of the truth, " and through him thou shalt do valiantly, " for he it is that shall tread down thine enemies," Pfal. lx. 4. 12.

Go on, my foul, go on to fight the Lord's battles, by a vigorous refiftance of fin and Satan; maintain a conflant guard upon all the motions of thy spiritual enemies, hold up the shield of saith, and draw the sword of the Spirit against all their assaults: Suppress the first risings of corruption, make no provision for it, resolve not to yield to it, walk in the Spirit that thou mayest not fulfil the lusts of the slesh; never make league with these Canaanites, but vex these Midianites, and smite them; mortify this body of death and all its members, strengthen such principles, and dwell upon such considerations as are proper for the weakening

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of the power of finful lufts: And then, be of good comfort, this house of Saul shall grow weaker and weaker, and the house of David stronger and stronger. Thou haft feen, my foul, thou hast tasted the bread and wine which the Lord Jesus, that bleffed Melchizedick, has provided for the support and refreshment of all the followers of faithful Abraham, when they return weary (and wounded perhaps) from their fpiritual conficts: Make use of this provision then, feast upon it daily, and go on in the strength of it: Thank God (as St Paul did in the midst of these complaints) for Jesus Christ, who not only hath prayed for thee, that they fail not, but is now like Mofes, interceeding on the top of the hill, while thou art like Joshua, fighting with these Amalekites in the valley: Be faithful therefore unto the death, and thou shalt shortly have a place in that new Jerusalem, into which no unclean thing can enter. Now thou groanest, being burdened, but in heaven there shall be none of these complaints, nor any cause for them.

Fourthly, Doth the trouble arise from prevailing doubts and fears about thy spiritual state? We may draw that from this ordinance which will help us to filence those fears, and folve those doubts, and to clear it up to us that God in Christ is ours, and we are his, and that all shall be well shortly. Many good Christians, though they are fo far willing to hope the best concerning themselves, as not to decline coming to the Lord's table, and there, perhaps they may meet with fatisfaction; yet afterwards the tide of their comforts ebbs, a fadness seizeth their spirits, the peace they have had they suspect to have been a delusion, and are ready to give up all for gone; unbelief makes hard conclusions, clouds the evidences, shakes the hopes, withers the joys, that it is as good give up all pious pursuits, as-thus keep them up in vain; as good make a captain, and return into Egypt, as perish in the wilderness, for this is not the way to Canaan:

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And thus many are kept from entering into the prefent Sabbatism or rest, which is intended for the peo-

ple of God in this life, by unbelief, Heb. iv. 9.

But, "O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou "doubt?" Come, call to remembrance the former days, the former facrament days, and the fweet communion thou hadit with God in them: days never to be forgotten. Thou doubtest whether God loves thee, and thou art ready to fay as they did, Mal, i. 2. 'Wherein hath he loved me?' But dost thou not remember the love tokens he gave thee at his table, when he embraced thee in the arms of his grace, killed thee with the killes of his " mouth, and his banner over thee was love?" Thou doubt whether thou be a child of God, and a chosen vessel or no, and are sometimes temped to fay, 'Surely ' the Lord hath utterly separated me from his people, ' and I am a dry tree, Ifa. lvi. 3. ' How shall be fet 'me among the children, and give me a pleasant land?' Jer. iii. 19. But dost thou not remember the children's bread thou hall been fed with at thy Father's table, and the spirit of adoption there 'fent forth into thy heart,' teaching thee to cry, 'Abba, Father !" Thou calledft. thyfelf a prodigal, and no more worthy to be accounted a fon, because thou didst bear the 'reproach of thy 'youth, which made thee ashamed, yea even confounded: But, did not God at the same time call thee as he did penitent Ephraim, a dear son, a pleasant child; were not his bowels troubled for thee? And did he not fay, I will furely have mercy on thee? Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20. Did not thy Father meet thee with tender compassions? Did he not call for the best robe, and put it on thee? Did he not invite thee to thee fatted calf? And, which was best of all, give thee a kiss which sealed the pardon? And wilt thou now call that point in question which was then so well fettled? 'Is God a man that he " should lie, or the fon of man that he should repent?" No, 'he is God and not man.' Thou doubtest whether Christ be thine or no? whether thou hast any interest

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in his mediation and intercession? Whether he died for thee or no. But didft thou not, at his table, accept of him to be thine, and confent to him upon his own terms? Didst thou not say to him, with thy finger in the print of the nails, 'My Lord and my God?' And did he not answer thee with good and comfortable words, saying unto thee, 'I am thy falvation? Hast thou revoked the bargain? or dost thou fear that he will revoke it? Was it not 'an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten?' Why art thou troubled? and why do thoughts arise in thy heart? Was not Christ present with thee, and did he not shew himself will affected to thee, when at his table, he faid unto thee, 'Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myfelf?' Luke xxiv. 38, 39. Thou doubtest whether thou hast any grace or no, any love to God, any faith, any repentance: But hast thou forgotten God's workings on thy heart, and the workings of thy heart towards God at his table? Did not thine heart burn within thee, when thy dear Redeemer talked with thee there? Didst thou not sit down under his shadow with delight, and fay, 'It is good to be here?' Didft thou not defire a fign of the Lord, a token for good? Didst thou not fay, 'Do not deceive me? And was there not a token for good shewed thee? Was not thy heart melted for fin? Was it not drawn out towards God? Did it not appear that God was with thee of a truth? wherefore then doft thou doubt of that which thou hadft then fuch comfortable evidences of? Why fayest thou, O Jacob? and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgement is passed over from my God?' Why dost thou entertain fuch hard thoughts of God and thy own ate? 'Haft thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the ever-I lasting God, even the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary,' Ifa. xl. 27, 28. And why art thou fearful and faint hearted? Why

And why art thou fearful and faint hearted? Why dost thou look forward with terror and trembling, while thou hast so much reason to look forward with hope and

and rejoicing? Alas, faith the troubled spirit, God hath cast me out of his fight, and I fear will cast off for ever, and will be favourable no more: I shall no more see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living! My comforts are removed, and all pleafant things are laid waste? 'My bones are dried, my hope is loft, and I am cut off 'for my part.' Ezek. xxxvii. 11. But hearken to this thou that thus fearest continually every day: Dost thou. not remember the encouragements Christ gave thee at. his table to hope in him, and to expect all good from him: Did he not fay, 'I will never leave thee nor for-' fake thee?' And didst not thou promise, that thou wouldst never leave nor forfake him? Nay, did not he promise 'to put his fear into thy heart, that thou might-'est not depart from him.' He did: 'And is not he faith-'ful that hath called thee,' faithful that hath promised, who also will do it? Thou art asraid that some time or other Satan will be too hard for thee, and thou shaltone day perish by his hand: But hast thou not had that precious promise sealed to thee? That 'the faithful God' will never fuffer thee to be tempted above what thou 'art able; but will with the temptation make a way for 'thee to escape,' I Cor. x. 13. His providence shall proportion the trial to the strength; or, which comes all to one, his grace shall proportion the strength to the: trial. Thou art afraid, that after all thou shalt come: short; that by reason of the voilence of the storm, the treachery of the fea, and especially thine own weakness. and unskilfulness, thou shalt never be able to weather the point, and get fafe into the harbour at last: But, shall I ask thee, thou that followest Christ thus trembling, 'Dost thou not know whom thou hast believed?' Is thy falvation intrusted with thyself, and lodged in thine own hands? No, it is not, if it were, thou wouldst have reafon to fear the loss of it: But hath not God committed it, and hast not thou committed it to the Lord Jesus? And is not he 'able to keep that which is committed to ' him against that day?' That great day, when it shall be called for? Is not that a divine power that keeps Aa 3 thee?

thee? A divine promise that secures thee? Be no

fearful then, 'Be not faithlefs, but believing?

Fifthly, Are we disquieted and discouraged by the troubles and calamities of this life? From our communion with God in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, we may fetch comfort and support under all the afflictions of this present time, whatever they be. Our matter instituted this facrament in the night wherein he was betraved, and foon after he put off the body, and pleafantly faid, 'Now I am no more in the world;' but when we have received this facrament, we find ourselves still in a house of clay, liable to many shocks, and so close is the union between the foul and the body, that what toucheth the bone and the flesh, cannot but affect the spirit at fecond hand. We are born and born again to trouble: Besides that, we are exposed with others to the common calamities of human life, and the perfecutions which all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must count upon: we are under the dif. line of fons, and must look for chastifement. Afflictions are not only confistent with the love of God, but they flow from it: 'As many as I love "I rebuke and chasten.' They are not only reconcileable with the covenant, but a branch of it. I will chasten their transgressions with the rod, and their fins with stripes, is an article of the agreement with David and his feed, with this comfortable clause added, "Nevertheless my · loving kindness will I not utterly take from him.-My devenant will I not break, Pfal. Ixxxix. 32, 33.

There is no disputing against sense: Christianity was not designed to make men stocks and stones, and Stoicks under their calamities. 'No affiction for the present is joyous but grievous. Hence the best men, as they have their share of trouble, so cannot but have the sense of it; that is allowed them, they grown, being burdened; but this sense of trouble is apt to exceed due bounds: It is hard to grieve, and not to over-grieve; to lay to heart an afficien, and not to lay it too near the heart. When grief for any outward trouble over-whelm our spirits, imbitters our comforts, hinders our

joy in God, stops the mouth of praise, takes of here hariot-wheels, and makes us drive heavily on our way to heaven; then it is excessive and inordinate, and turns into fin to us. When forrow fills the heart and plays the tyrant there, when it makes us fretful and impatient, and breaks out in quarrels with God in his providence, and robs us of the enjoyment of ourselves, our friends and our God; it is an enemy that we are

concerned to take up arms againft.

And from our facramental covenants and comforts we may fetch plenty of arguments against the unreasonable infinuations of inordinate grief. Did I not fee at the table of the Lord a lively representation of the fufferings of Christ, the variety-and extremity of his sufferings: Did I not fee his tears, his fweats, his agonies, his stripes, the pain and shame he underwent? And is the servant better than his mafter, and the disciple than his Lord? Did Christ go by the cross to the crown, and shall a Christian expect to go any other way? The Captian of our falvation was made perfect thro' fufferings, and have not we much more need of them for the perfecting of what is lacking in us? Is not this one part of our conformity to the image of Christ, that as he was a man of forrows, and acquainted with grief, fo we should be, that he might be the first born among many brethren? A. fight of Christ's afflictions should reconcile us to our own: especially if we consider, not only what he suffered, but how he suffered; and with what an invincible patience and chearful fubmission to his Father's will leaving us an example, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Have we oft celebrated the memorial of Christ's sufferings; and have we not yet learned of him to fay, 'The cup that my Father hath given me shall I not drink it? Tho'it be a bitter cup, Father, not my will, but thine be done. Have we not yet learned of him, who was led as a lamb to the flaughter, to be dumb, and not to open our mouths against any thing that God doth; to forgive our enemies, and pray for our perfecutors, and chearfully to fubmit ourselves to him that judgeth righteously? Let the fame

fame mind be in us, which here we have feen to be in

Yet this is not all: In the Lord's fupper we give up ourselves, and all we have unto the Lord, with a promile to acquiesce in all the disposals of his providence concerning us and ours; let us not therefore, by our discontent and uneasiness, revoke the surrender that we then made, or go counter to it. We there faid it, and fealed it, that we would be the Lord's; and may he not do what he will with his own, especially when it is fo by our own confent? God there faid it, and fealed it to us, that he would be to us a Father, and can we take any thing amiss from a Father? fuch a Father. who never chastens us but for our own profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness? Inviolable affurances. were there given to us, that all things should work together for our present good, and for our future glory: that, as afflictions abound, confolations should so much ! the more abound, and some experience we there hadof the sweetness and power of those consolations, which we ought to treasure up, that we may have them ready for our supports in the evil day. Can we forget how fweet God's smiles were which there we saw? How reviving his comforts were which there we tafted? And are not those sufficient to countervail the loss of the: world's flattering smiles, and the comforts we have in the creature? It is generally supposed, that the comfortable fermon which Christ preached to his disciples. on that text, 'Let not your hearts be troubled,' Johnxiv. immediately followed the administration of the Lord's supper; for it is the will of Christ, that those whom he hath raised up to sit with him by faith in heavenly places, should not be cast down or disquieted for any cross or disapointment in earthly things.

Art thou fick, languishing perhaps under some wasting distemper which consumes thy strength and beauty like a moth? Or chastened it may be with pain upon thy bed, and the multitude of thy bones with strong pain? Or, labouring under the infirmities and decays

of old age? Take comfort then from thy communion with the Lord at his table. Didst thou not fee there, how Christ himself bore our sicknesses, and carried our forrows then, when he bore our fins in his own body upon the tree, and fo took away the sting of them: extracted out of them the wormwood and the gall, which he himself drunk in a bitter cup, and insused into them the comforts of his love, which he hath given us to drink of? Didft thou not there receive a fealed pardon? Did not God, in love to thy foul, cast all thy fins behind his back, and tell thee fo? Thou hast then no reason to complain of bodily distempers, Isa. xxxiii. 24. 'The inhabitants shall not fay, I am fick?' How fo? How can one that is fick avoid faying, I am fick? Why, it follows, 'The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.' And fickness is nothing, or next to nothing, to those who know that their fins are pardoned. When thou didft prefent thy body to God in that ordinance a living facrifice, and didft engage that it should be for the Lord, was it not graciously added, and the Lord for the body, I Cor. vi. 13. And if the Lord be for the body, he will firengthen thee upon the bed of languishing; and though he may not presently help thee off it, yet he will fit by thee; and, which speaks the wonderful condescenfion of divine goodness, " he will make all thy bed in "thy fickness," Pfal. xli. 3. And that bed cannot but be made easy which he hath the making of.

Art thou poor, croffed in thine affairs, disappointed in lawful and hopeful designs? clogged with cares? and perhaps reduced to straits? Let the spiritual riches secured to thee in that sealing ordinance, be a balance to the affliction of outward poverty. The God of truth hath said it, and thou mayest rely upon it. That those that sear him and seek him, shall not want any good thing: not any thing that infinite wisdom sees realy good for them. "Trust in the Lord therefore, "and do good with the little thou hast, so shalt thou "dwell

" dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed," Pfal. xxxvii. 3. It is not promifed that thou shalt be feasted with varieties and dainties; those that are feasted at God's table need not to complain, though they be not feasted at their own; but thou shalt be fed, fed with food convenient for thee. Some good Christians that have been in a very poor condition have faid, That they have made many a meal upon the promifes when they wanted bread. "Verily thou shalt be fed;" pafcere fide: So the learned Junius reads it: 'Be fed with faith,' and compares it with Hab. ii. 4. 'The just ' shall live by his faith:' And good living; good feeding it is. 'Though the fig tree do not bloffom, and 'there be no fruit in the vine;' yet, while thou hast in the Lord's Supper feen the Rose of Sharon blossoming, and tafted the truit of the true Vine, thou haft reafon enough, however it be, to 'rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of thy falvation,' Hab. iii. 17, 18.

Are thy relations a grief to thee? Do those afflict thee of whom thou saidst, These same shall comfort me? Suppose thy yoke-sellow unsuitable, children undutiful, parents unkind, friends ungrateful, neighbours injurious: yet the comfort of our relation to God may suffice to make up the loss of comfort in any relation on earth. If man be salfe, yet God is saithful: if man be harsh, yet God is gracious. Tho' the waters of our rivers may be mudded or turned into blood, yet the sountain of life runs always clear, and its streams pure as chrystal, Rev. xxii. 1. It was upon the supposition of samily disappointments, that David in his last words took comfort from the covenant of grace made with him, 2 Sam. xxiii, 5.

Are those who are dear to thee removed from thee by death? It is sit that which is so sown should be watered: but sacrament-comforts will keep us from sorrowing as those that have no hope for them that sleep in Jesus. We have lost the satisfaction we used to have in them; but is not God better to us than ten sons. Far better than ten thousand such relations

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could have been. And yet they are not lost, they are only gone before, and death itself cannot wholly cut us off from communion with them, for we are come to the spirits of just men made persect, and hope to

be with them shortly, Heb, xii. 23.

Are the calamities of the church and of the nation our affliction: It is fit they should be so: for we have eaten and drunk into the great body, and as living members, must seel its grievances; but in the Lord's supper we have seen what provision the grace of God hath made for his houshold, and from thence may infer the protection under which the providence of God will always keep it safe. The promises that are sealed to us are sure to all the seed, and the covenant of grace is the rock on which the church is built so firm, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The Lord we see hath sounded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust to that. Let us at this ordinance learn this new song, and sing it oft, 'Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.'

Sixtbly, Are the fears of death a trouble and terror to us? we may fetch from the Lord's Supper that which will enable us thro' grace to triumph over those fears. This is a fear which is often found to have torment, and by reason of it, many weak Christians have been all 'their life time subject to bondage, Heb. ii. 15. It is likewise a fear which often brings a snare, exposeth us to many temptations, and gives Satan advantage against us. There are many who we hope thro, grace are saved from the second death, and yet are asraid of the sirst death, being more solicitous than they need to be about a dying life, and more timorous than they need to be of a living death, a death that is their way to life.

But the arrests of death, and its harbingers would not be at all dreadful, if we did but know how to make a due improvement of the comforts we are made partakers of at the table of the Lord. We there faw Christ dying, dying so great a death, a death in pomp, armed and attended with all its terrors, dying in pain, in

shame,

flrame, in darkness, in agonies, and yet the Son of God, and the heir of all tnings. This takes off the reproach of death, fo that now we need not be alhamed to die: if Christ humbled himself, and become obedient to death, why should not we? It likewife takes off the terror of death, fo that now we need not be afraid to die. When we walk through that dark and dismal valley, we have no reason to scar any evil. while the great Shepherd of the sheep is not only gone before us, but goes along with us, 'his rod and his flaff they comfort us, Pfal. xxiii. 4, He is our leader, and we do not approve ourfelves his good foldiers, if we be not willing to follow him whitherfeever he goes. He went through death to the joy fet before him, and we cannot expect to follow him to that joy but in that way. Through this Jordan we must enter Gandan.

The death of Christ hath broken the power of death, and taken from it all the armour wherein it trusted; so that now, let it do its worst, it cannot do a good Christian any real prejudice; for it cannot 'seperate him' from the love of God. Surely the bitterness of death is now past,' by Christ's tasting it, (Heb. ii. 9.) The sharpness of death Christ hath overcome, by submitting to it, and so hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. 'The sucking child may now play upon this hale of the asp, and the weaned child may put his hand on this cockatrice den; for death itself shall not

hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain.'

Nay, the death of Christ hath quite altered the property of death. It not only ceaseth to be an enemy, but it is become a friend: the covenant of grace, sealed to us in the Lord's supper, assures us of the unspeakable kindness that even death itself shall do us. All things are yours, —and death amongst the rest, i Cor. iii. 22. As the death of Christ was the purchase of our happiness. so our own death is the passage to our happiness: it dischargeth us from our prison, and conveys us to our palace. The promise of eternal life sealed

fealed to us, and the earnests of that life communicated to us in this ordinance enable us to look with comfort on the other fide death, and then we need not

look with terror on this fide.

Art thou afraid to give up thy foul? Thou haft already given it up to God in Christ to be fanctified, and therefore then mayft with a holy chearfulness give it up to God in Christ to be faved. The dying Jesus by committing his spirit into the hands of his father. hath emboldened all his followers in a dying hour to do the fame. Why should that soul be afraid to go out of the body, and quit this world of fenfe, which is through grace allied to, and by faith acquainted with the bleffed world of spirits, and is sure of a guard of angels ready to convey it to that world, and a faithful

friend ready to receive into that world?

Art thou afraid to put off thy body? the covenant fealed to thee at the Lord's table is a covenant with thy dust, and gives commandment concerning thy bones. Fear not the return of thine earth to its earth: it is in order to its being refined, and in due time restored to its foul, a glorious and incorruptible body. Spiritual bleffings are perhaps for this reason in the fagraments represented and applied by outward and fensible signs, in the participation of which, the body is concerned, that we might thereby be confirmed in our believing hope of the glory prepared and referved for these bodies of ours, these vile bodies, which even while they lie in the grave, fill remain united to Christ, and, when they shall be raised out of the grave, shall be made like unto his glorious body.

Let the finners in Zion be afraid to die, let fearfulness surprise the hypocrites, when their souls shall be required of them: let their hearts meditate terror. and their face gather blackness who, having lived a carnal, worldly fenfual life, having no interest in Christ and the promises; for they shall call in vain to rocks and mountains to shelter them from the wrath

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of the Lamb: but let them that have joined themfelves to the Lord in an everlasting covenan, and
have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful to that
covenant, lift up their heads with joy, for their redemption draws nigh. Death will thortly rend the interposing veil of sense, and time will shortly scatter all
the dark and threatening clouds which here hang over
our heads, and will open to us a bright and glorious
scene in that blessed world of light, life and love, where
we shall enjoy the substance of those things which at
the Lord's table we are resreshed with the shadows of,
and the full vintage of those joys which here we have
the first fruits of,

Learn then, my foul, learn thou to triumph over death and the grave, 'O death, where is thy thing i Qgrave, where is thy victory? Having laid up thy treasure within the vail, and remitted thy best effects, and best affections thither; and, having received the earnest of the purchased possession, be still looking, still longing for that bleffed hope. Fear not death, for it eannot hurt thee; but defire it rather, fo it will greatly befriend, thee. When the "earthly house of "this tabernacle shall be diffolved" thou fhalt remove to the "house not made with hands, eternal in-" the heavens. Wish then, wish daily, for the coming of thy Lord, for he shall appear to thy joy; " The "vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak and shall not lie." Look through the windows of this house of clay, like the mother of Sifera, when the waited for her fon's triumph, and cry through the lattice, "Why is his chariot fo long in " coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots? " Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

FINIS.

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